JULY 2025

# The Woodland Heights Herald

Helping Make Our Community as Friendly as it is Beautiful



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# Lights, Camera, Darkness

#### **NEW LIGHTING BYLAW COMES INTO EFFECT NEXT JANUARY**

The ten-year grace period for the Outdoor Lighting Bylaw that was passed in 2016 is up on January 25, 2026. We're reminded that as of January, architectural and landscape lighting must be turned off between the hours of 11 p.m. and sunrise the following day. This includes any path lighting on a residential property, which would have to have motion sensor lights and the time installed on them.

The Bylaw also encourages the use of law-wattage lights that are oriented downwards to minimize glare and light trespass through the municipality.

This dark sky friendly lighting policy has been championed for close to ten years for the benefit of wildlife, as well as those who come from the city to enjoy the beauty of our dark skies. Please be courteous with your lighting and be mindful of these new requirements. The Bylaw does allow for enforcement.



# The Propane Buying Group

#### A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES AND AT OUR RESPONSIBILITES

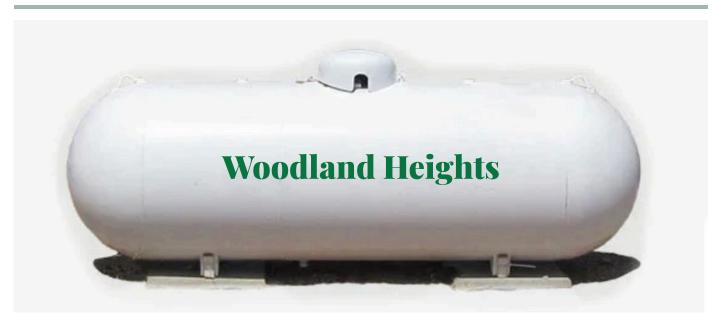
The collection of the annual dues has recently been completed by the WHCA (Woodland Heights Community Association). There are many benefits we receive in return for these dues as noted <u>here</u> on our website. One of them is eligibility for our Propane Buying Group Program. As the past winter weather was so extreme, we thought it would be timely to share information with you:

- About the evolution of the Propane Buying Group
- To help our residents optimize the benefits of the program

The property where Woodland Heights was built was owned for generations by the Waterhouse family. What was originally the Waterhouse forest was developed by Bill Waterhouse starting in the 1990's. As the initial homes were built, Bill aided the new homeowners by checking in with local propane companies to get better terms for the new community residents. By the time Phase One in Woodland Heights consisted of close to 20 homes, he sold the development to a Toronto based developer who had no interest in dealing with resident propane needs. So, the fledgling community association of the day took on the responsibility of representing homeowners with propane companies on an annual basis. As the community grew, managing propane was becoming increasingly important and the community association appointed a Board Director to take responsibility to manage this annual function.

By 2012, the propane program was evolving such that those involved had developed significant expertise in managing and understanding the propane industry in Muskoka. By 2015, Woodland Heights had gained attention from other lake and community associations in north Muskoka. They were all struggling with service issues as well as high propane and associated costs but had no expertise in delivering value to their members. Over the next ten years, the program grew significantly as many associations joined with Woodland Heights to professionally manage propane services for their members.

Today, the propane program is a Collective of nine partners associations, including Mary, Fairy and Peninsula Lakes, among others. The North Muskoka Propane Buying Group is the largest propane buying group north of Toronto. By this Fall, there will be 700 homes in the program – quite a success story based on Woodland Heights as the founding association! This is in no small part due to the hard work, commitment and tireless effort of Ross Maund over many years. In addition to being the coordinator for WH, Ross also oversees the entire Collective. This consists of a team of nine propane coordinators who understand and monitor fuel commodity markets on a rigorous basis. They have direct communication with the supplier, fully developed performance agreements, detailed contract formats and engage in tough minded negotiations annually.



# The Propane Buying Group Continued

The Collective works hard to achieve the ongoing best value to participants. They make themselves available 24/7 to assist any homeowners with propane related needs. We should be very grateful to Ross and this committed group of volunteers for their time, effort and effectiveness on our behalf. The Collective is, in fact, currently looking for a member who could become the propane coordinator for Woodland Heights. This would free Ross up to focus on overseeing the Collective. Please see the Job Call that follows on the next page to learn more about the attributes for a good candidate.

#### Understanding our responsibilities as homeowners

This past winter presented some very challenging weather, record snow conditions and endless squalls that closed south Muskoka several times. It's important to be aware of our responsibilities as homeowners to ensure that propane can be delivered safely to you:

- Propane trucks are regulated under TSSA code (Technical Standards and Safety Authority) in Ontario and must be able to access your roadway and/or driveway safely
- Drivers must feel their vehicle will not be compromised by unsafe access. If pathways to your tank are not cleared, they are not obligated to provide the delivery due to risk
- Tanks must be clear of snow and there needs to be a path to the actual tank site from your driveway. As an alternate, it may be preferable to clear a path to the tank site from the roadway, if the logistics are more favourable (eg if you have a steep or icy driveway)

Note that your tank is considered FULL when filled to 80% of capacity (this is the maximum fill rate under regulations). At 30%, your propane tank 'monitor' automatically communicates with the supplier so they can start planning a delivery to you within the coming weeks. Tanks are not automatically filled immediately at a 30% reading, but the expectation is that you will be filled before you get to 20%.

Check your tank monitor often, especially in the winter months. Removing snow can damage a tank monitor, so please take care. You can cross reference your tank gauge with the tank information provided on the MySuperior website. If things don't seem to be going right, if you have concerns or need information, call the association propane coordinator for Woodland Heights. The coordinator will be trained to access all departments and have expertise of the program. Woodland Heights homeowners should call Ross Maund (705) 787-0775 @ 33 Natures Way until advised differently.

While winter seems a long time away, please make note of these requirements and have a plan in place to ensure they are met, particularly if you'll be away at some point.



### Save the Date

#### **OUR WOODLAND HEIGHTS STREET PARTY WILL BE SEPTEMBER 28TH**

We hope that the summer brings you time to spend with friends and family. At the summer's end, we look forward to coming together as a community for our signature event! Please mark your calendars for our Woodland Heights Street Party on Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> from 4 to 6 PM in the Sanctuary Parking Lot. More details to follow in August, including a Pot Luck Sign Up Sheet. Don't miss this fun and relaxed event, back by popular demand!

## **Volunteer Job Call**

#### PROPANE COORDINATOR FOR WOODLAND HEIGHTS

Your community needs your help. If you have attributes like those below, you could be the ideal candidate to represent Woodland Heights for the North Muskoka Propane Buying Group. You now know how essential this group is and the excellent results it has produced. As the volunteer WH association coordinator, you:

- Enjoy recording, analyzing and understanding data
- Value providing accurate and timely results
- Are comfortable with computer technology and working with reports
- May have a background in engineering or working in large systems
- Are part of the Collective and participate in all programs, standards and requirements
- Attend meetings, participate as a team member of the Group, whose primary focus is to provide service and value to member participants

The WHCA coordinator would work with the President of the WHCA and the Managing Director of the North Muskoka Propane Buying Group. You would also have contact with your counterparts from the other member associations.

Coordinators spend on average about 5 hours a week on this role and participate in monthly two hour evening calls, hosted by the Managing Director. Training takes between six months to one year, and while there is no compensation *per se*, the role is very rewarding and there is satisfaction in enjoying the direct benefit of the group's work.

If you are interested in learning more or think you may be a candidate, please contact WHCA President Lisa Conway at <a href="mailto:lisa.conway88@gmail.com">lisa.conway88@gmail.com</a>. She will be delighted to hear from you and answer your questions!



Photo Credit Canya

# Foraging 101

#### FINDING WILD FOOD IN NATURE

Have you ever walked through a forest trail or a meadow and wondered if the plants around you could be more than just scenery? Foraging—the practice of gathering wild food from nature—is a time-honored tradition that connects us with the land and offers a unique way to explore the outdoors. Whether you're looking to add wild ingredients to your meals or simply curious about the plants around you, foraging can be a fun and rewarding hobby. But like any outdoor activity, it comeswith responsibility. Knowing what to look for (and what to avoid) is key. Here are a few common and easily recognizable wild edibles:

- **Dandelions:** Often dismissed as pesky weeds, dandelions are entirely edible. Try the young leaves in salads, use the flowers to make tea or jelly, and roast the roots for a coffee-like drink.
- Violets: Both the leaves and purple flowers of wild violets are edible. They're a lovely and mild addition to salads.
- Maple Blossoms: In early spring, the blossoms of the big leaf maple can be picked and eaten—stems and all. They're tender and slightly sweet.
- Chanterelle Mushrooms: A sought-after delicacy with a meaty texture and peppery aroma. Only forage these if you're confident in mushroom identification—there are toxic look-alikes!
- Wild Leeks: Their oniony smell gives them away. Also known as "ramps," both the greens and bulbs can be used much like store-bought scallions.

Before You Head Out... Foraging isn't just about finding food—it's also about respecting ecosystems and staying safe. Laws vary depending on location, and not every patch of green is fair game. Start with these helpful resources:

Foraging in Ontario: How to Get Started
Foraging Classes by Wild Muskoka
Public Health and Foraged Mushroom Consumption in Ontario

#### Final Thoughts:

Foraging can deepen your appreciation for the natural world and bring unique flavors to your kitchen. Just remember: when in doubt, leave it out. Learning with an experienced forager, using guidebooks, and starting small are the best ways to grow your knowledge safely. Happy foraging!

#### Disclaimer:

Some wild plants can be poisonous. This article is intended as a general overview of foraging. The writer is not an authority on the topic. Always consult trusted sources and experts before consuming wild foods.



### **Deerhurst Resort: The Next 50 Years**

You may recall when we left off, Charles Waterhouse had retired and sold the property to his son, Maurice, in 1925. In the 1970s, when the resort was purchased from Maurice by his son, Bill, Deerhurst underwent its first significant renovation, becoming a year-round operation with conference facilities, a lounge with entertainment and winter activities.

In the mid 1980's the resort expanded dramatically with the addition of multi-bedroom condominium suites, the original Pavilion Sports Complex, and the Deerhurst Highlands Golf Course. Carrying on entertainment traditions of the founders, the 1980s would also put Deerhurst firmly in the entertainment spotlight as home to what became Canada's longest-running variety stage show production. This is where a young singer named Shania Twain began her rise to music superstardom. When the resort opened Deerhurst Highlands and redesigned the Deerhurst Lakeside golf courses in that same period, it laid the groundwork for Muskoka's emergence as a major Canadian golf destination.

#### End of the Waterhouse family era:

The Waterhouse family's ownership came to a quiet end in 1989. The property was sold, at the time being able to accommodate 1000 guests on its almost 800 acres.

For most of 1990's, Deerhurst was managed by Canadian Pacific Hotels. At the time it even featured a private airstrip for guests to arrive in style. In 1998 it was acquired by Massachusetts Mutual, through its subsidiary Cornerstone Real Estate Advisers. With this ownership change, a new chapter in Deerhurst's history began with an \$18,000,000 expansion of the Pavilion which added a new hotel wing, conference centre, lobby, Eclipse restaurant and indoor pool in 2000. During this period Deerhurst was managed by Newcastle Hotels based in Connecticut.

Guests arriving at Deerhurst were now welcomed in a magnificent new 3 story lobby that featured stone columns, luxurious furnishings, slate flooring, and a double-sided fireplace. A lounge was located off the lobby featuring a 52-foot-long hand paneled historical map of the region. An art gallery was included as part of the multimillion-dollar expansion, with a goal of showcasing exhibits featuring art and artists of the Muskoka area. The newly added Eclipse restaurant featured a soaring open beam ceiling with windows overlooking Pen Lake.

Deerhurst also increased the amount of space available for business meetings, conferences, exhibits and special events, with the addition of the Waterhouse ballroom, an 8000 square foot subdividable ballroom.



# Deerhurst Resort: The Next 50 Years Continued

In March 2005, management of the resort was assumed by Atlific Hotels. In the renovated Peninsula Room, views through the windows continued to provide a majestic backdrop while the newly added Rotunda provided three new meeting rooms, bringing the total to 14 in the pavilion alone, and 32 throughout the resort. A new four-story guest wing was added with an octagonal tower and 102 new rooms and suites.

#### Deerhurst today:

In June 2010, Deerhurst made history as host venue for the 36th G8 Summit of world leaders including President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and Chancellor Angela Merkel. Shortly after, the property was acquired by Skyline Investments in January 2011. Under Skyline, the new Golf Cottages residential community was developed around Deerhurst Highlands Golf Course and the Summit Lodges (renamed for the G8) were renovated.

In 2015, a 10-year, \$500 million master planned community with hotel, residential and mixed-use buildings received municipal approval, ensuring Deerhurst's growth as a top Canadian tourism and lifestyle destination well into the 21st century. In July 2019, the first project of that master plan, Lakeside Lodge opened, adding 150 waterfront resort homes for guest and owner enjoyment, on the very same site as the original 1896 lodge. In December 2021, Deerhurst's long history entered its next chapter as part of Freed Hotels & Resorts, alongside Muskoka Bay Resort, Horseshoe Resort, and a future development at Blue Mountain.

#### An enduring legacy:

Charles Waterhouse left a legacy that still carries on today. Almost single handedly, he created a first-class renowned resort that was the hub of social activity for northern Muskoka. From a child of privilege to a pioneer in a new land to an entrepreneur of the highest order, Charles Waterhouse left an indelible mark on Muskoka and a tradition that carries on today.

#### References:

The Muskoka Sun: July 15, 1999, Scott Turnbull The Muskoka Sun: June 29, 2000, Kristan Jones

Deerhurst Resort: A Century of Hospitality in North Muskoka: Laura Kennedy

Deerhurst Resort: www. https://deerhurstresort.com/history

## **Getting to Know You**

#### **DISCOVERING OUR NEIGHBOURS**

Two years ago, Delfina Onisto and her husband Larry moved to Deerfoot Trail from Uxbridge to be closer to their dream cottage in Port Sydney. Since then, they've become familiar faces in the neighbourhood — often seen walking their dog, Orsa, or singing in the Huntsville Community Choir.

Delfina, a retired educator, is also a powerhouse athlete with a story that speaks to resilience and quiet determination. In 2019, she completed an Ironman in Arizona — a feat that includes a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride, and a 26.2 mile run. Her journey to the start line was just as impressive as the race itself. Along the way, she faced injuries like stress fractures and other setbacks, but she never let them stop her. Through years of training, triathlons, and half Ironmans, she kept showing up — and ultimately crossed the finish line with pride, placing 27th out of 52 in her age group!

Her love of swimming began when her children were young and taking lessons. She joined in with stroke improvement classes and discovered a passion that's stayed with her ever since. Most recently, she set an Ontario record in the 1500m Freestyle — a remarkable achievement that reflects her continued dedication to the sport!

Ever focussed and energetic, Delfina shares "Since moving here I have been training with MUSAC (Muskoka Aquatic Club) Masters, who practice alongside the teen swimmers in the pool at the Bracebridge Sportsplex, two or three early mornings a week. In summertime I swim in Mary Lake, out of Port Sydney. I plan to compete in Masters swimming until I can reach the W100-104 category!"

Delfina's husband, Larry, is a big supporter. In addition, they share an enthusiasm for music and motorcycles. Together, they bring a vibrant energy to the community. Be sure to say hello if you see them out and about. Thank you, and keep making waves, Delfina!

