

Sorting out the sails
c. July 2004

To the editor: Having written an earlier letter to draw public attention to the proposed lease to Sail Parry Sound of part of Centennial Park and the public meeting that was scheduled to outline the details of this proposal, I felt it was only fitting that I do so again now that this planned usage has been made clear. Sail Parry Sound made a well handled, concise and factual presentation with a full site plan and slide presentation, which left no doubt as to what the planned changes and usage of this portion of the park will be.

My major concern with this area was that the public access would be curtailed in any fashion. The presentation made it clear that just the opposite would be the case and it would eventually, become more accessible for my wife who is now non ambulatory.

Additional parking and lighting and a promenade to view the channel in both directions, which will eventually be wheel chair accessible can only add to the enjoyment of this area in the future for everyone in the community . The rebuilding of the old wharf and addition of a launch will make the park a very well chosen site for the schooling and storage needs of Sail Parry Sound and add yet another attraction on the harbour to promote the area and the economy while at the same time offering the younger generation growing up here the opportunity to learn to sail and work together for a common goal and a certain amount of discipline to accomplish this end that was never offered here before.

For those of us that are a little long in the tooth to dive into these activities whole heartedly, as Elwood Robinson pointed out at a spry 86, it will all rekindle the memories of this site in its glory days when it was the main summer hub of activity in our youth where we learned to swim, fish from the wharf, picnic, our first low and high dives and most all our summer firsts of youth.

Elwood also, as one of the many citizens of the community on fixed incomes, had it made quite clear that these upgrades would not be taking a large bite from his tax dollar, and in fact would all be done with available funding and community donations and fund raising events.

From my present view these are changes and upgrades that are 25 years overdue and will enhance the area a thousand fold by a group's efforts that already maintains a reputation for getting things done right.

While working away from our home town for 24 of the last 28 years and returning for holidays, it would break our heart to see the sorry state that this park had been allowed to deteriorate to and the lack of use it suffered because of the condition it was in.

It will be a joy to now watch it be developed back to a state where our grandchildren will have the opportunity to use this site again and perhaps build some of the best memories of their youth here as well. I feel confident that this will all come to pass with time and Sail Parry Sound at the helm.

Jerry Gougeon, Parry Sound