

# BETWEEN FRIENDS

🌻 working with the park to make it an even better place to visit 🌻

## Autumn Heralds Winter 2012

### FRIENDS OF SANDBANKS PARK

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Friends web page is [www.pec.on.ca/friends](http://www.pec.on.ca/friends)

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The Friends of Sandbanks Park is a Registered Charity #893935767

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Evelyn Sloane	Newsletter Editor; Co-chair Scenes of Sandbanks	613-476-3277
Doug Sloane	Co-chair Scenes of Sandbanks	613-476-3277

### 2012 MEETING DATES

The Friends of Sandbanks Park meetings are usually held the first Tuesday of the month at the Park Office. The AGM is held offsite in December and is a pot-luck dinner. Great food and good fun. All members are welcome to attend any meeting, but please confirm in advance, by phoning Mark Despault at 613-476-1509.

The printing of the newsletter is made possible by the generous support of Robin Reilly, Superintendent of Sandbanks Provincial Park. Thank you to Robin and all of the staff at the Park who support the Friends in so many ways. We would be pleased to print articles pertaining to memories of Sandbanks; joys or woes of camping; book reviews; recipes - Snail mail to the Friends address or e-mail to [romar@kos.net](mailto:romar@kos.net). Deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is March 18, 2013.

The contents of this newsletter are the sole property of the Friends of Sandbanks Park and may not be reproduced without the permission of the editor.

Local companies advertise in the newsletter. Their generosity helps to offset the costs of producing the newsletter. Please support these local businesses in the County.

*Of autumn's wine, now drink your fill; the frost's on the pumpkin, and snow's on the hill.*

It has been a busy summer for both the park and for the Friends of Sandbanks. The park boasted record attendance in both camping and day use. Events such as Lakeshore Lodge Days, Theatre in the Park, Sandcastle Fest and the Trash Bash, to mention a few, kept our Friends of Sandbanks volunteers working hard. On that topic, I would like to thank both the park staff and the Friends volunteers for keeping the park such a great place to spend time.

I am particularly excited about the Friends latest publication Sandscapes "Exploring the Dunes of Sandbanks Provincial Park." The book is selling very well and we have had very positive feedback, including a wonderful article by our old friend naturalist Terry Sprague. Sincere thanks and acknowledgements must go out to Yvette Bree and all the contributors to the book who supplied both text and photographs. Well done! The book is available for \$14.95 at Books and Company and Black Prince Winery.

Presently we are working with Robin Reilly on several fronts. Tree planting is on going and we still have our sights set on building a lookout tower on the new Dunes Trail. Additionally, we have submitted an application to the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund to construct a trail along the shores of Lake Ontario. This trail will start at West Point and proceed east for approximately one and three-quarter kilometres. If the bid for funding is successful, the trail will accommodate both hikers and cyclists and take visitors to areas of the park presently difficult to access.

Check in to our newly designed web site for more updates over the winter.

### The Sunset of My Years

Evelyn Sloane



As I sat down to put the finishing touches on the Autumn Heralds Winter edition of the newsletter I googled Earth Calendar - October 1 - International Day of the Elderly! What a Hoot. Squire Sloane and I are probably busier now than we have ever been since we retired 17 years ago. We moved to the County and did not know a soul except for a couple who were 'weekenders.' As we had always been active volunteers we joined a few organizations. The first was the Friends of Sandbanks. We met Charles Lacey at the Picton Fair and came out to the AGM. The rest is history. Last week alone we volunteered for 3 different organizations at 3 widely diverse events. Elderly has a new meaning for people of our generation. It means get off your ass, meet people, become involved, take a

hike, learn to play a musical instrument, make new friends, celebrate life, drink some wine, try new recipes - I could go on, but you get the picture. If 40 is the new 60, we will soon be younger than our children.

#### Thoughts on aging

*The elderly volunteer an average of ~115 hours for each person aged 65 and over per year.*

A Chinese proverb says that we naturally see the beauty of youth, but must learn to see the beauty of age.

*Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter. - Mark Twain*

At my age I don't buy green bananas. - Ed Mirvish

*Old age is no place for sissies*

Wine is cheaper than therapy.

*We are part of the Rusty Years, Silver in our hair, gold in our teeth, titanium in our joints and lead in our butt!*



Thanks to Penny for the photographs!

Errata - culled from the daily logbook at the Park.

Comment made by a young child observing a brown snake in a terrarium in the Nature Shop at the park:  
"Daddy, the snake doesn't like me; he keeps sticking his tongue out at me."

It is often noted that a new person, with a new set of eyes, sees things that others more familiar overlook. While I have been working as Superintendent at Sandbanks since February I still see some things with 'fresh eyes'. This also means that how I experienced the park is similar to how new park visitors see it. Now I could carry this theme to a variety of insights but for this short article let me pick just one. Where does this park start and stop? ..... how do I know when I'm in the park?

For experienced park users this may seem an odd question but I've talked to many with the same question. The source of the confusion comes from the park that in the 1950's was two parks .... Sandbanks to the west and Outlet Beach to the east. In the centre was an area of rocky points, farm fields and private homes and cottages. In 1971 the Government of Ontario decided to join the two parks and set about acquiring the intervening land.

Today most of that land is now part of the park, but it does not look or feel like a park. Most people experience this centre portion of the park from the windshield of their car and even the road does not seem like a parkway drive and it is not. The road and its adjacent corridor are the property of the municipality, so the drive is not technically in the park. Many of the agricultural fields are slowly reverting to forest and the Friends of Sandbanks have helped this transition through tree purchase and tree planting. Many other fields are leased for active farming, but by 2017 these too will begin the slow transition to forest. Some of the large older homes have been purchased by the park with the intention of adapting these to other purposes, although this remains a task not yet accomplished. Several homes and private cottages remain and will likely continue to be used that way into the distant future. So in summary, other than the Woodlands Campground, there is not much that in this middle area that suggests a provincial park.

Many small projects will gradually help to build some unity to this park and make it look and feel like a park from end to end. The Friends of Sandbanks have played and will continue to be responsible for many of these initiatives. Projects to date have included tree planting, trail building, interpretive signage, benches, bicycle trails and special events. Work on a Lakeshore Hiking Trail will likely be the next small step. Over the next few years the Friends may become involved in projects ranging from supporting a tree nursery to renovating old houses into a visitor centre. All of these projects and the continued growth of the forest may in 25 years make the middle of the park become a full partner with its neighbouring beach areas. If you are interested in seeing these and other projects across the park become a reality, you may want to join the Friends of Sandbanks or support their efforts through donations or merchandise purchases.



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The following is an adaptation of an article that was written many years ago by Terry Sprague, then Assistant Naturalist at Sandbanks, about the pannes of the West Lake dunes system. The information is still true today and it serves as encouragement to people to visit this "special place" at this time of year, when the flowers that Terry writes about are still blooming.

**A VERY SPECIAL PLACE**

By Terry Sprague

At first glance, the areas suggest a flooded wasteland. But a closer look in these low wet depressions, located near the parking lots of Sandbanks and Dunes Beaches, reveals a variety of plants eking out their survival in what is essentially a sterile environment.

These wet areas are known as *pannes*, and were created by wind action scooping out the sand between the foredunes along the beach and the higher ridge of backdunes. They are rare habitats in Ontario and offer a striking example of an inter-relationship between plants and their environment. Because the sand contains limestone, the environment in which these plants grow is alkaline – a condition in which nutrients are locked in the soil and unavailable to plants. The water level fluctuates in the pannes as the position of the water table rises and falls, and daily to seasonal changes occur. It takes a special plant to adapt to these conditions.

In some of the low lying areas of the pannes where nutrients have concentrated due to leaching from higher ground, ideal conditions have been created for a number of colourful wildflowers. A walk through the pannes at this time of year will reveal the small, delicate blooms of Kalm's Lobelia, which have been flowering throughout most of the summer with only a few late ones hanging on.

Similarly, the twisted spikes of white Ladies' Tresses are coming to an end, but the pinkish bell-like flowers of the Purple Gerardia are common right now. Each flower only lasts one day, though individual plants can produce many flowers. Fringed Gentians are just starting to bloom and - depending on the weather we get this fall - may even be seen flowering into November.



*Ladies' Tresses*



*Kalm's Lobelia*

In the water-logged areas of the pannes, plants must cope with low oxygen levels. Sedges and rushes, for example, have hollow stems and large air spaces in their leaves through which oxygen can be carried down to the roots. In the drier areas, characterized by low hummocks of sand, the reverse is true. Here the sand is incapable of retaining much in the way of nutrients. Some plants, such as Canada Rye Grass, Red Osier Dogwood and White Cedar tolerate these conditions and cap many of the smaller hills of sand. Below these hummocks, but still in the drier areas, Wormwood and Silverweed flourish.

Most of the pannes in the West Lake Sector (those near Sandbanks Beach) have been naturally created. One panne, however, referred to as the "back pit" (near Dunes Beach) was formed when sand was removed from the area - first for bricks and later for cement. These operations left behind a panne very similar to those found elsewhere in the park. If you would like to see the pannes and its fall showing of wildflowers, a walk along the new Sandbanks Dunes Trail will take you through the a panne before it continues up into the dunes. You can find the beginning of the trail in at the Dunes Beach Day Use Area.



*Purple Gerardia*



*Fringed Gentia*

As avid Sandbanks campers, we have been coming here since 1980. Over the thirty years, there have been many changes to the park, some good, some perhaps less so. Many of you, as long-time supporters of Friends of Sandbanks, will relate to these differences. I hope those of you who are newer members will be amused by my reminiscing.

Some of the things that existed then, but not now, include the windsurfing school/rentals, lining up in the spring to book campsites, a private campsite right beside the park, and two main entrances to the park (one right opposite Martin's) which was still not enough to prevent line-ups blocking the roads most weekends.

Ontario Parks came into being so MNR signs disappeared. Over the years governmental and Ontario Parks finances, plus the increases in park attendance, have forced many changes. Staffing the many aspects of Sandbanks requires a balancing act worthy of tightrope walkers. Ensuring there are sufficient staff for the myriad of chores is in itself, a full-time job. There are maintenance staff to open, maintain, track water quality and close the park. Park wardens are on guard to protect the environment, peoples' park enjoyment, and prevent illegalities (from drinking on the beach to holding raucous parties at campsites). Trained gate staff and administration personnel to prevent long line-ups, answer dozens of queries and complaints and ensure that accurate statistics and financial records are kept. Lastly, but by no means the least are naturalists and NHE staff to protect the biology, and educate children and adults about Sandbanks. There are fewer drive-throughs by the wardens looking for infractions (noise, alcohol abuse, parking concerns etc.). Beach patrolling seems to be done by ever younger staff (or is it my age talking) and less frequently than in the past.

Entrance fees are noticeably higher but so are all costs. Computerized campsite booking and cell towers are now the norm. It is no longer necessary to stand on top of your van to access a weak cell signal. Some of the improvements and additions to the park are memorable. From one hiking trail, the Cedar Sands Trail, to three with the addition of Woodlands Trail and the Dunes Trail, making many aspects of the park more accessible. In fact, (watch this space) there are plans for yet another trail if financing can be arranged. The pathway alongside the main Outlet road was refurbished by the Friends and more visitors are bicycling through the park leaving their automobiles behind. Woodlands campground came into being and several others between A and B areas now have electricity. In time, another camping area may be formed.

New comfort stations have replaced older ones throughout the park, most with showers and some laundry facilities. The renovated Park Store and Dunes concession carry a much wider range of foods. Some of the areas roads were even paved along with Dunes area parking lots.

Campers themselves have changed. The demographics of the 'average camper' at Sandbanks would be hard to define. The many nationalities represented in the park ensure English is only one language of many. Wonderful smells of unusual foods often waft through the evening air. Overall more campers have trailers or tent trailers than in the past. Small beach 'tents' now dot the beach along with the ever-present colourful umbrellas. Several styles have changed including beach chairs and bathing suits, boom boxes have given way to iPods, bocce ball is becoming common on the beach whereas feeding the gulls is discouraged.

Some things have not changed – vault toilets (though less smelly than in the past) and our tiny, aged Visitor's Centre and Friends Nature Shoppe. NHE (Natural Heritage Educational) staff and the Friends of Sandbanks Park work hard to make them appear fresh each year with new displays and merchandise but the size and age of the building are still of concern.

What changes have you seen in your visits to the Park over the years?

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## Come to your Senses at Sandbanks

Camping at Sandbanks is a very sensual experience.

What would you add to each of the lists? Some are pleasant some not.

### Sounds

Bird banger to scare the birds away from the corn

Hérons and loons flying overhead, gulls on the beach after snacks (usually yours)

Banging of the vault toilet door and the beach-cleaning tractor before 7:00 am.



Chipping of chipmunks and cooing of mourning doves

That horrible mosquito beside your ear at bedtime

Garbage bag rustling thanks to the night-time raccoon visitors

Rain on tents and tarps

Glorious quiet of mid-afternoon at the campsite

Waves

### Sights

Misty mornings

Cheerful campfires

Butterflies, dragonflies and fireflies

Beach umbrellas blowing down the beach

Sunsets and thunderstorms



Trenton Air Force fly-past checking out the bathers

### Touch/Feel

Water temperature at the beach

Sunburn, mosquito bites and poison ivy itch

Warmth of a campfire

Sticky toasted marshmallow

Damp sheets/ sleeping bags

### Taste

The first coffee of the day

Burnt marshmallows

Sand in the sandwich

Fresh fruit on the beach

All food cooked outdoors

That 'cold one' enjoyed after spending hours at the beach



The New Dunes Trail

### Smells

Bacon cooking on someone else's site

Brewing coffee

Coconut sun screen

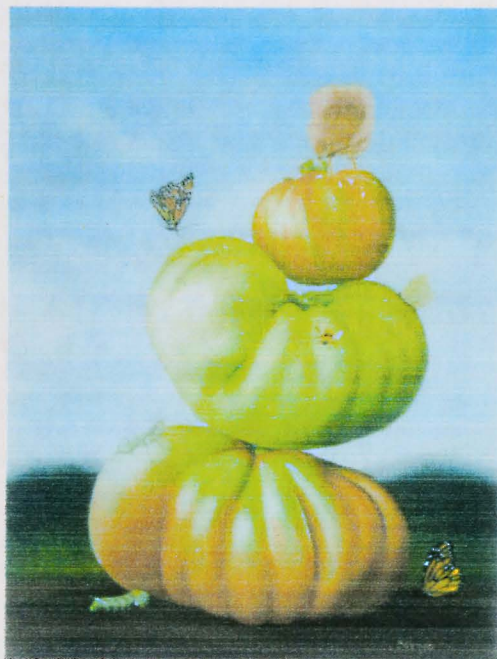
Campfire smoke

Vault toilets!

I first met **Sharon Lee Argyle** at Art in the County a few years ago. Her painting of 'Smarties', one of my Food Groups, instantly endeared me to her work. Vivacious, luscious, humourous - there are not enough adjectives to describe her vibrant art.

Sharon, originally from Edmonton, received her formal art training at Central Technical School in Toronto where she studied painting with Doris McCarthy. She studied art history, painting and classical Chinese at York University and the University of Toronto.

Sharon lives in Prince Edward County, Ontario with her husband, son, cat and chickens. Her paintings are collected internationally. The paintings depicted here are of produce grown in Sharon's garden - yes the peaches too! For more information visit [www.sharonleestudio.com](http://www.sharonleestudio.com)



*Argyle in Summer*

Artist Statement . . .The changing light of day and the moods it creates are the foundations of Sharon's oil paintings. Layers of transparent glazes are used to achieve a luminous quality and the use of chiaroscuro [an Italian term which literally means 'light-dark'] brings a painting to life. Minute structuring of details as they interact with one another generates tension and interest on an abstract level. Sharon captures a split second in time -- a suspended reality of a particular light and season in order to engage the viewer artistically, emotionally, and intellectually. A synthesis of colour, composition and texture in unison speaks directly to the viewer without further explanation.



*Argyle on a Limb*

**Peggy deWitt**, Professional photographer, has been a resident of Prince Edward County for most of her adult life where she has photographed and captured the beauty of the area in all its moods and seasons. Peggy's work is well known and appreciated for its distinctive interpretation. Peggy has published three books of Prince Edward County and for the eighth year a County calendar. All have photography showing the richness of country life, the spirit of the people and the unique landscapes of "The County". Peggy enjoys sharing her knowledge about photography, teaching camera courses and doing photography workshops.

*Sandbanks - The Golden Beaches of Prince Edward County, Ontario* (\$9.25) is a favourite book to send home with visitors to the County.

Visit [www.peggydewitt.com](http://www.peggydewitt.com) for shopping online.

Peggy very kindly donated her time and expertise to the production of this years *Scenes of Sandbanks and Beyond* poster. Thank you Peggy.

