

Beach fun, but attracted chaos

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"It was an amphibious plane. It comes on the water and as soon as it got shallow the pilot put his wheels down, poured the coal to her and kept right up on the beach. That was a real thrill.

"And then he just whirled her around on her wheels and did the same thing when he went out."

The beach was fun, but despite people's best intentions it also attracted trouble.

Over the years, people tried to improve the beach experience. Different service groups put in picnic tables and brick fireplaces.

"Imagine, beautiful stone barbecues with metal plates," he illustrates.

The efforts of these groups were in vain because people set fire to the tables and/or smashed the fireplaces.

Alan adds that some groups chained the tables to the trees, but that did

not stop others from tearing the tables away and burning them on the sand.

Broken bottles were also a problem and still are today. Beach goers always had to mind the ground when going barefoot, he says.

Some parties also got too wild and the police were called in.

"That was the bad side of the beach."

From Alan's description of what the beaches were

like then, not much has changed, except for the level of water. At one time the lake was right up to the bush.

However, the water has dropped by almost five metres over the years.

The beaches are still undeveloped, with only a few change rooms, no shops or other tourist attractions one would see at other sandy locations.

People are not using the beach, at least not as much as they used to, Alan

expresses.

He chalks it up to showers, economics and children having more things to do.

About the only time Fourth Sand Beach gets packed is on Canada Day.

For about three years, the Town of Blind River has taken advantage of the sun and sand to celebrate the nation's birthday.

Alan says the town should promote this beach as a tourist destination, especially if it is tar-

geted at families who drive through or stop in Blind River.

"We've done a lot, but it's not advertised. People are driving along in summer with a bunch of kids and this would be a heck of a nice place to have a swim."

The appeal of the beach has not changed. It is still warm in the summer and the sand is as smooth as ever.

"To me this is an asset," says Alan.