

Resort residents forced to boil water

Campground owner refuses to abide by MOE order to provide safe water

By R. Bruce McIntyre
Staff Writer

Eganville -- "We will try our best to make a nice and happy place for you; Mac's passion and her spirits will carry on and on here."

These were the words of Frank Ye in May 2010 when he purchased Mac's Ce-Dar-Est from Jack and Lorraine MacDonald.

When Mr. MacDonald handed the keys over to Mr. Ye, an era of change was in the winds.

Six years later, some year-round residents at the renamed Cedar Beach Camp Resort on Mink Lake are worried about the long-term condition of their collective properties.

Inconsistent water supply, a two-year-long boiled water advisory, maintenance issues, a lack of proper signage for motorists and children, and other problems at the site have some residents concerned their retirement investment may be losing some of its value.

The *Leader* was first notified last fall by Hilary Packard about the condition of the water supply.

"I moved here from Ottawa as part of my retirement plans," Mrs. Packard said. "I bought this home in good faith, and since the day I moved here it has just been one thing after another."

"There have been instances when the water has not been working for two or three days on end. You would think when you pay a monthly rate for the basics like water and sewage, those services would be provided," she said. "Over the last few months, we have had the water turned on for two hours in the morning and then two hours later in the afternoon. You have no idea what it is like to turn your tap on in the middle of the day and nothing happens."

"But whenever basic repairs are needed, they never get done, and that just isn't right."

Mrs. Packard is not the only permanent resident worried about the state of decline of the park since Mr. Ye purchased the site in 2010. A number of residents interviewed by the *Leader* expressed their disappointment with the new owner.

John Miller, a fellow retiree who is fed up with the conditions of the campground, did not mince words.

"One word comes to mind, and that word is slumlord," he said. "I have lived here several years and when the MacDonalds owned the property, we never had any problems. They really took care of the property, and when something did happen, they took care of it right away."

Following months of unsuccessfully trying to reach Mr. Ye, a resident of the campground independently paid for the repair of the community well and had the septic system pumped. He has yet to be reimbursed for his out-of-pocket expenses.

"We had a septic issue and it was up to us to get it fixed," Mrs. Packard said. "You would think paying a monthly fee for these services would help keep on top of things, but it doesn't."

Property Values Devalued

For the 14 year-round residents who call Cedar Beach Resort home, they have seen the value of their homes plummet since Mr. Ye purchased the site. Of the 14 residences, two were recently sold at 40 per cent less than the original asking price, and an additional five homes have been for sale for over two years.

"As soon as a prospective buyer comes on the property and looks around at all the 'For Sale' signs and hears about the conditions, they run away as quickly as possible," Mrs. Packard said. "It is very discouraging."

The residents say it is the little things that are not done that, in their view, has devalued the park and the value of their homes. They list the lack of gravel on the main roads, the overgrowth of bushes and weeds, and they are concerned about the lack of road signs endangering both residents and children during the summertime.

"It got so bad that one of the residents in the campground made road-way signs to remind drivers to slow down," a resident said. "Although we constantly told the owner about the safety and need for signs, he never did it, so a resident did it. It is just all the little things that add up."

"Five years ago, these homes would have been snapped up," another resident said. "Today, they just sit there going down in value and we have our retirement tied up in our homes. I am pretty sure we will never see a return on our investment."

Although the permanent residents own their individual units, and pay municipal taxes, they reside on Mr. Ye's property. Some are fearful of reprisals in light of Mr. Ye's history.

To make matters worse, 12 of the 14 residents received eviction notices from the owner.

"This man has no morals what so ever," Mrs. Packard said. "To add insult to injury, he sent the eviction notices in Christmas cards last December. It just goes to show what kind of a man we are dealing with." Last fall some of the residents took

Mr. Ye to the Landlord and Tenant Board to dispute a large increase in their monthly fees and his refusal to consistently plow the roads during the winter months. Other issues brought forward included charging an administration fee over and above the amount he was charging the tenants for their hydro bills, and threatening and coercing tenants.

In the end, the board ruled against Mr. Ye and ordered him to refrain from substantially interfering with the reasonable enjoyment of the residents and refrain from threatening or coercing any tenant in the residential complex.

More Legal Action

The ongoing issue of poor water quality and his refusal to repair the only source of water on the site resulted in further legal action against Mr. Ye.

In March, Mrs. Packard and three neighbours took their complaints to Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board. The board, relying on evidence from Ontario's Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change showing Mr. Ye hadn't maintained the well or regularly tested the drinking water since taking ownership of the park in 2010, ruled in favour of the residents.

A provincial water inspector, Jen Bitten, wrote in her summary "that residents are now faced with extended periods of no water being supplied to them." According to documents Ms. Bitten wrote, they stated, "contact with Mr. Ye has been by email only. The numerous phone numbers that have been provided either do not reach a live person, cannot leave a message or are simply not in service. No message left at any of the phone numbers has been returned to date."

The Landlord and Tenant Board fined Mr. Ye \$6,000 and awarded Ms. Packard and the complainants retroactive damages of \$50 per month to offset the cost of buying drinking water. The board gave Mr. Ye until May 6 to fix the community's well system.

According to some residents at the campground, there was consistent running water after May 6, but those contacted by the *Leader* were hesitant to consume the water without boiling it first.

Inspectors from the Renfrew County Health Unit posted a boil-water advisory on Friday in relation to the second well on Mr. Ye's property serving the seasonal users of the trailer park.

In a recent CBC interview, Mr. Ye accused the residents of purposely

sabotaging the well and denies there are any real problems with the water in his park. He said he wouldn't be making any repairs to the well as none are needed.

"You talk to the cheaters, you get a cheating answer," he said in the CBC report.

Mr. Ye denied he has a poor record with the Ministry of Environment. In the CBC report, he claimed he never had any report from the MOE and said he had no idea what they were talking about. He is quoted in the news report as saying "if they say I'm breaking the law, bring me to court. That's fine."

Mr. Ye's Other Campsites

Cedar Beach Camp Resort is not the only property owned by Mr. Ye. Among his assets is the Crystal Beach Resort in Madoc.

In July 2010, Mr. Ye issued eviction notices to about 50 residents who owned trailer homes at the park. They were given one year to vacate the park as stipulated under current Ontario law.

Most of the residents were elderly, on fixed incomes, and resided in the park for decades. Mr. Ye offered them \$3,000 to purchase their homes if they did not want to relocate them. He told them he intended to convert the campground into a seasonal site only and not have any year-round residents on site.

Most of the homes had additions built on and could not be easily moved. The residents have since moved and many of them lost thousands of dollars in the process.

In July 2011, the Ministry of the Environment was called in to oversee the cleanup of a sewage leak on the property. Mr. Ye also received two separate fines from the Ministry of the Environment. A \$12,000 fine was issued for failing to comply with a ministry order in relation to the inspection of a drinking water system and a \$4,000 fine for failing to remove all liquid industrial waste and contaminated soil by an approved waste hauler to a certified receiver.

Mr. Ye was also found guilty of assault with a weapon and dangerous driving when he struck a resident of the campground with a front-end loader.

According to court documents, Mr. Ye got into a disagreement with a park resident, Heidi Jorgensen. He left and returned driving a front-end loader. As she stood in front of a deck, Mr. Ye "nudded" her twice with the bucket of the loader. The third time the bucket hit her on the knee and she fell backwards and landed on

the ground and Mr. Ye then lowered the bucket, resting the left corner on the deck with Ms. Jorgensen underneath it.

Mr. Ye received a \$2,000 fine and a nine-month driving suspension.

When the *Leader* attempted to interview Mr. Ye at the campsite, he refused to answer any questions. When asked about the state of water and the chance of complying with ministry standards to provide clean water, Mr. Ye quickly jumped in a golf cart with a campsite employee

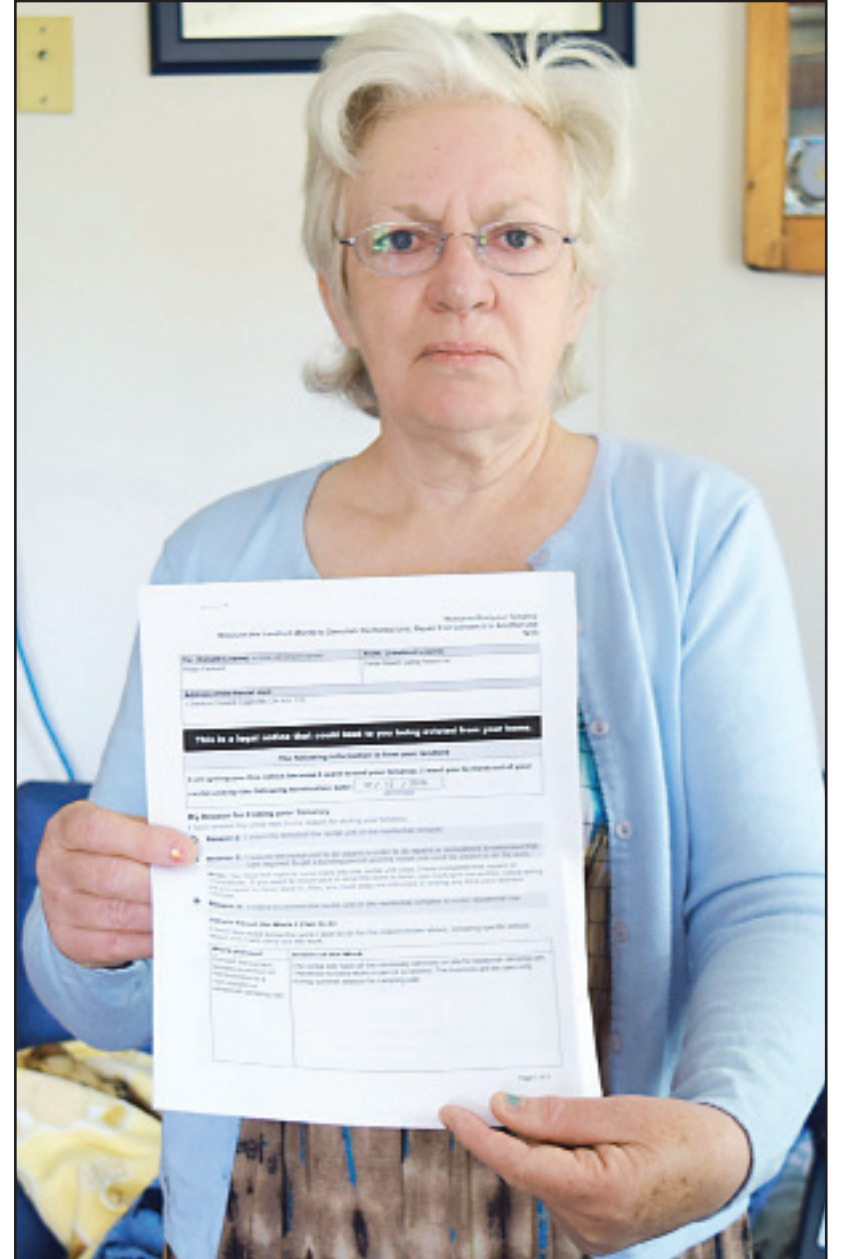
and drove away into the campground. He has yet to respond to phone calls from the *Leader*.

NAW Gets Involved

At last Monday night's meeting of North Algona Wilberforce Township council, the matter came up briefly with Mayor Deb Farr saying council would be drafting a letter and sending it off to the county health unit.

"It's a health issue to go that long without water," Mayor Farr said.

There was no further discussion on the matter.



Hilary Packard, who purchased her residence at Cedar Beach Camp Resort as part of her retirement strategy, was recently served an eviction notice from owner Frank Ye. Ms. Packard and 11 other residents received the notices in Christmas cards last December. She states it was their recent actions of taking Mr. Ye to the Landlord and Tenant Board and their ongoing battle for basic services that led to their eviction.



Hilary Packard and a number of other seniors at the Cedar Beach Camp Resort have put signs up on their property to alert fellow campers of the boiled water advisory that has been in effect for more than two years. The community well has not worked properly and residents have only had running water for about five hours a day despite an order from the Ministry of the Environment to camp owner Frank Ye to repair the well.



Seen here when he purchased the former Mac's Ce-Dar-Est campgrounds on Mink Lake is Frank Ye, his daughter Jing, and his young son Brighton. Mr. Ye has been taken to various tribunals over the last six years in relation to complaints raised by tenants at a number of seasonal parks he operates in Peterborough and Eganville. Since he bought this campground in 2010, there have been several boiled water advisories and fines levied by the Ontario Landlord and Tenant Board and the Ministry of the Environment.

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YOUR LOCAL WEATHER FORECAST

Wednesday May 11	Thursday May 12	Friday May 13	Saturday May 14	Sunday May 15
Sunny HIGH 20°C (68°F) LOW 8°C (46°F)	Sunny HIGH 24°C (75°F) LOW 15°C (59°F)	Light Rain HIGH 19°C (66°F) LOW 8°C (46°F)	Chance of a Shower HIGH 12°C (54°F) LOW 3°C (37°F)	Chance of a Shower HIGH 10°C (50°F) LOW 2°C (36°F)

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