

Lion's Head Summer

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED
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Students in a kayak class practise their skills just off shore at Lion's Head with the Niagara Escarpment cliffs in the background.

A scenic view of Georgian Bay with kayakers in the foreground and a forested hillside in the background. The water is calm and greyish-blue. In the foreground, a yellow kayak is partially visible on the left, and a white kayak with a person is in the middle ground. Further out, a blue kayak with a person is visible. The background shows a dense forest of green and yellow trees on a hillside, with some buildings visible through the trees.

Ahhh, a Lion's Head summer!

What could be better? Whether you come for a weekend, a week, a season, or a lifetime, there is no place else like it. Nestled on the shore of Isthmus Bay, Lion's Head is surrounded by the towering, white limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment. The crystal-clear, turquoise waters of Georgian Bay stretch to the eastern horizon. This small port town, located halfway up the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula, offers fun, adventure, relaxation, and serenity for everyone. Lion's Head is a destination that you can enjoy season after season, or generation after generation. It always feels like coming home!



▲ Lion's Head has a lovely sandy beach close to the centre of town.

Dave Irish and Christine Conway of Waterloo have spent two weeks every summer in Lion's Head for the past 15 years. "We just love Lion's Head!" says Dave. "It's our happy place, and there is nowhere we would rather be. We were hiking in the area when I proposed by the lighthouse. We were married on the beach, and took our wedding photos on a friend's boat in the marina. We camp at Lion's Head Beach Park to celebrate our anniversary. The fishing is incredible, and we enjoy the music, warm welcome, and amazing scenery." Christine adds, "This summer, we caught some huge

salmon and trout. We feel so blessed to share time in the Lion's Head community!"

Many families have a story like this about Lion's Head. There are cottagers and seasonal campers that are second and third generation visitors. Lion's Head is a small village with a friendly, small town feeling but it gets busy, especially on summer weekends. If you are planning to go, be sure to book reservations for food and lodging. There are a range of options to stay: bed and breakfasts, inns, motels, cottages, and campgrounds. Some excellent restaurants are located downtown, plus a few more in Ferndale

nearby. Hellyer's Foodland, the grocery store, also has lots of picnic options. Check first that they have re-opened after their devastating fire last year. If you plan to hike to Lion's Head Lookout, which is spectacular, you must book a parking reservation.

Parking throughout Lion's Head is pay-per-use; this helps generate municipal revenues to provide clean facilities, garbage collection, and other visitor services. Please follow the signage to avoid parking tickets. On summer weekends, a free shuttle makes a regular circuit of the village to help people move about the community. You can park at the arena on Tackaberry

St. for a reduced rate, and use the shuttle or walk to explore. Despite the abundance of guests, Lion's Head remains a welcoming, charming, laid-back community. Locals often approach visitors to offer advice or suggestions. While I was taking pictures for this story, a resident called across the street to ask if I had seen the lighthouse yet. Most people will greet you with a smile or a wave.

Relax or Be Active

Lion's Head offers plenty of activities to enjoy but is also a wonderful place to relax and unwind. Try a lounge chair at the sandy beach, or a cool beverage at one of the



▲ Popular for sailing, power boating, and fishing, Lion's Head Harbour has been described as the prettiest marina in Ontario.



▲ The August Civic Holiday weekend street party draws a good crowd for great music, food, dancing and fun for all ages.



▲ William's Cave on the Bruce Trail just north of Lion's Head has fascinating geology which Dennis Stier of Southampton is examining here.



▲ The restaurant part of Lion's Head Inn has closed, but there will be more options for accommodation.



▲ The shape of a lion's head is thought to be visible in the Escarpment cliffs across the bay, giving the village its name. This view is from the Bruce Trail just north of town.



restaurants. Sunrises over the Escarpment cliffs are enticing for some, while an evening of local music may suit others better. Harbourside Music features local talent on Friday evenings, 7-8:30pm through July and August, at the waterfront park; these events are by donation, and support community charities.

Don't miss the Lion's Head Farmers Market which happens Saturday mornings, 9am-noon from Victoria Day until Thanksgiving. It is a great place to sample local produce and baked goods, meet artisans, buy craft beer, enjoy a gourmet breakfast, and listen to more local music, all at the beach. How about maple kettle corn? Then, you can dive



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right in for a refreshing swim, or practise your sandcastle building. If you are a shopper, there are fun stores to peruse uptown. You can check out The Shops at 84 Main, which include Aunt Donkey's, the Dandy Lion, and Murdle's Mercantile. Or visit Poppa Bobbers, tucked away

upstairs in Scott's Home Hardware.

Long weekends in summer offer lots of family fun: the Canada Day parade, Rotary Big Breakfasts at the beach, free hotdogs and cake, the August Civic Holiday street party, the Bruce Peninsula Art Show, and the Quilt Show. There is always something



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happening! Connie Barker of Southampton stays with girlfriends at Lion's Head Beach Park Campground; she enthuses, "We have a great time here every visit. The people are really kind and helpful, the scenery is amazing, and we love the live music! We come back each year."

Outdoor Adventure

For outdoor adventurers, Lion's Head is an incredible destination. With Escarpment cliffs for climbers, the Bruce Trail for hikers, crystal-clear waters for paddlers, great fishing and views for boaters, and quiet back roads for cyclists, there are so many ways to be active in the fresh air. While the hike to Lion's Head Lookout is very busy, you can follow the Bruce Trail north along the shore to visit William's Cave, and other scenic lookouts. Kayaks are available to rent but please paddle within your skill limits as Georgian Bay can turn wild quickly. Storm watching can be fun too when you are safe and dry!

Bernie Wieder and family from Salzburg, Austria, spent an unforgettable day in Lion's Head while travelling by motorhome up the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula. "We feel very welcome here," notes Bernie. "We arrived late in town but friendly neighbours sent us to Rachel's Restaurant for fish and chips, and local entertainment. It was perfect! This morning, we walked to the marina and lighthouse, and had a quick swim. We would love to visit again on our next Canadian holiday." Perhaps, you'll meet them when you come to explore and enjoy the beauty and hospitality of Lion's Head. **NEV**

Sandra J. Howe's last feature for this magazine was "Traditional Teachings at Cape Croker Park," Winter 2023-24.



▲ The Weider family, from left, Sabine, Bernie, Johanna, and Julian, from Salzburg, Austria relax in front of their rented motorhome in Lion's Head Beach Park Campground.



▲ Local musicians provide free entertainment at Lion's Head Farmers' Market on Saturday mornings throughout the summer.

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