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A local group of volunteers have won the coveted 2008 *Grand River Conservation Authority Watershed Award*. The recently founded Port Maitland, “On the Grand” History Association (PMHA) has taken one of this year’s awards for the labour that over sixty volunteers and various companies have contributed to the cleanup of the Port Maitland Feeder Canal lock at Port Maitland. On the evening of October 30th, (I) Bill Warnick, President of this group journeyed to Cambridge to receive the 2008 award on behalf of the many volunteers who have given their time their talent and their resources to this project.

As I hopefully worm my way back into the hearts and minds of the staff and readers of The Chronicle, I am flattered that the Chronicle asked to write this article personally. Who else gets to present a totally unbiased report on their own activities?

I am reminded of the saying that “many hands make small work” or a quote rather like that. There is little doubt that it was I who called a meeting in 2003 at the Sherbrooke Baptist Church inviting anyone interested in this project to offer suggestions and more importantly a helping hand and maybe a dollar or two. Many responded making possible not only this recognition received possible; but it is in simple terms work well done. To see the lock today and remember what it looked like in 2003 is truly to recognize improvement. This award was received on behalf of those volunteers and donors. It was they who made the transformation, and it will be them and hopefully new volunteers who will continue to improve what has been started. Much more is needed to be done, much more will be done, and many more hours will be volunteered. Why not join us either as a working bee, thinking bee, or contributing donor! We need each of you.

Quoting from the Grand River Conservation Authorities (GRCA) webpage regarding their initiatives to encourage and recognize those who contribute positively to the Grand River watershed. It state: “Since 1976 the Grand River Conservation Authority has honoured those who have put their time and effort into making the Grand River

watershed a better place to live. The GRCA presents two types of award: The Honour Roll Award is given to those who have a sustained record of achievement over an extended period of time and finally, the Watershed Awards are presented for outstanding examples of conservation and environmental work.”

Not including this years winners there have been 27 previous winners in just the past five years. The GRCA clearly put it hands into our community looking for groups who either formerly or informally take upon themselves to clean up the shoreline or waters within the source of the Grand River watershed. In looking over the list of past recipients I find men and women who worked alone and others who worked in pairs. I find companies who worked independently as well as companies who joined forces to make a difference. School children have won the award for the efforts made by their students. At least one couple who raise pigs and cattle choose to hold back runoff from their establishment by planting trees along the shore of streams running through their property. Fences were built to keep the animals from entering the creeks or streams.

There are many opportunities to do your part preserving the Grand River for future generations. Each spring in particular newspapers and other media run stories and ad requesting volunteers for spring cleanups. Why not give the GRCA a call right now asking them if they could put you in touch with such groups. They can be reached year-round at 1-866-900-4722 or volunteer@grandriver.ca , or call me at 905 549-6086 or wwarnick@cogeco.ca . Of course I will grab you up for our own needs!