

## **Letter to the Lake of Bays Association...**

*My name is Colin Eadie and I was the driver in an accident on Lake of Bays which resulted in the death of my friend, Matthew Ludlow in July, 2011. Matt was a friend from high school and we played on the football team together. We had been trying to find a weekend for him to come to the lake and finally arranged the weekend of July 9 – it was perfect weather, clear skies and calm waters. After a wonderful day on Saturday, we headed out in the evening to visit friends around the lake. Around 3:00 a.m. we decided to come home in my boat. Although we had been drinking, I thought I was in full control; I did not feel impaired or the least bit unsafe. It was a dark night but I felt I knew the lake well and could navigate home without a problem. I was wrong – we hit Pancake Island in the dark. Of the four of us in the boat, three walked away with only minor physical injuries. Matt did not; he was killed and the lives of his family and friends have been devastated forever. I was responsible for Matt's safety; he was my guest and I was the driver.*

*I never believed this could happen to me. I thought I was in control, that I would not do anything stupid. I was aware of the dangers of drinking and driving a car but felt boating had a different standard. I was incredibly wrong and I want to share this with everyone to increase the awareness of the danger of drinking and boating. Just because it is the summer and everything is relaxed there is no relaxing of the rules or the dangers.*

*This accident has devastated the Ludlow family. Matt was a kind, outgoing, generous guy who will be missed each and every day by his mother, father and brother. Christmases, birthdays and holidays will never be the same without him. Matt's friends feel his loss and I wake every day thinking of him and what could have been. My own family has been profoundly affected as well and the strain on them has been immense.*

*I am now facing the legal consequences of my decision – prison time, criminal record, legal expenses, and the loss of my driver's licence. As bad as these consequences are, they pale in comparison to the loss of my friend. I would do anything to turn back the clock or switch places but I can't. I beg you all to recognize the dangers; there is no place for drinking and driving a boat. The lake, while wonderful in so many ways, needs to be respected because it can be as dangerous as it is beautiful.*

*Once I am through the penalty I face, I would be pleased to address any group, young or old, on the dangers of drinking and boating. It is only through increased awareness that we can prevent tragedies like this from happening again.*

*Colin Eadie*