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Trail Markings

GVTA newsletter

Spring 2022

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Update from the Board

by Annie Côté-Kennedy

Free entry passes to Elora Gorge Conservation Area

With spring in the air and after the cold February, thoughts are likely turning now to more hikes and more outdoor excursions. Please be aware that if you trek regularly through the Elora Gorge, live in the area of the Gorge or are planning an end-to-end hike this year, we have been given a number of entry passes to the Elora Gorge Conservation Area.

As a result of a recent agreement with the Conservation Authority, the trail is now allowed to continue in the park however, the trail can only be accessed via one of the official park entrances. So, if you are a member, you can request a free entry pass by contacting us at info@gvta.on.ca. The passes allow members free entry when presented with proof of GVTA membership. We have a limited number of passes so they will be distributed to members on a first-come-first-serve basis along with a GVTA card.

April is Earth Month

Each year on April 22, people celebrate Earth and demonstrate support for environmental protection. Since its inception in 1970, the events have grown to include one billion people in more than 193 countries. Activities include everything from picking up litter and planting trees, to awareness campaigns and upcycling activities. Would you like to organize a GVTA activity for Earth Day? Please let us know by email programs@gvta.on.ca.

GVTA in the News

We were happy to have Kitchener CTV interested in featuring the GVTA in a segment of their local news in February. If you haven't seen the interview, you can listen to it [here](#).

Thank you to all our volunteers

There are currently 161 members who volunteer with the organization. As a charitable organization, we depend on our volunteers to run the organization. On this 50th anniversary year, and with Volunteer Month fast approaching, it is more important than ever to recognize all of you who support the association through your volunteer contribution: be it trail maintenance, leading hikes, working on an independent function like Store distribution, website management, managing a one-off project, sitting on the board. Thank you!

If you know of a volunteer who you think is particularly deserving of recognition, please take a moment to [nominate him or her](#) for a recognition award.

Finally, for the latest GVTA news, remember that you can always follow us on Facebook.

Bird Photo Contest - winning photos and recap

by Laura Anders

We were very excited to kick off the GVTA's 50th anniversary year by celebrating birds and how they add to our enjoyment of nature and hiking. In honour of National Bird Day, we hosted a special photo contest starting on January 5th. We received 18 beautiful photos which made this a very hard choice for our judges! Photos were received in two categories:

Category 1 – On the Trail: Photo depicting a bird taken on the Grand Valley Trail.

Category 2 – Off the Trail: Photo depicting a bird taken off the Grand Valley Trail.

Thank-you to our three exciting judges (or judging teams) who selected three finalists from each category:

- Bird experts: Catherine Hale and Peter Rasberry, Wild Birds Unlimited - Kitchener
- Environmental expert: Gavan Watson, PhD, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Photography expert: Brian Dernesch, KW Telescope

GVTA members then had the opportunity to vote on the three finalists in each category via a SurveyMonkey poll. One winner was chosen from each category.

“Off the Trail” winner taken by **Mark Duchene**



"On the Trail" winner taken by **Kathy Waybrant**



Congratulations to Mark and Kathy on their winning photos! They each chose a Henry's gift card as their prize, which they say they will put to good use. An honourable mention goes to our runners-up, Erika Malich and Ronald Cherry. Please visit the [GVTA website](#) to see their photos.

A virtual member event was held on the evening of February 2nd to announce the winners. We were also excited to have Catherine Hale and Peter Rasberry do a special presentation on birds and bird photography:

- Catherine did a very informative presentation on how to save the songbirds. She gave lots of great tips ranging from using window decals to how to use less plastic. You can go to Wild Birds Unlimited at 4391 King Street East in Kitchener to learn more on this topic.
- Peter Rasberry shared some of his beautiful photos of birds and other wildlife. Check him out:
 - <https://peterrasberry.zenfolio.com/>
 - Twitter: @peter_rasberry
 - Instagram: peter rasberry

Hiking Program Updates

by Petra Suffling

We've resumed our guided hikes! You'll find all of the hikes on the GVTA website at <https://gvta.on.ca/HikesEvents.htm> There are currently several posted between March and June, but keep checking back as more hikes will be added periodically. Some of the upcoming hikes you'll find on the calendar are:

Friday, March 25th – Iron Horse Trail with Brenda Wiegand

Sunday, March 27th – W.Montrose 10km with Charles Whitlock

Sunday, April 3rd – Floradale 7km with Didier Thevenard

Friday, April 8th – RIM Park 7km with Petra Suffling

Follow Grand Valley Trails Association's Facebook page for news and information, plus items of interest to all hikers. Some of our hikes appear under 'Events'.

Recognizing two of our unsung heroes:

Jan and Jamie Hember

by Annie Côté-Kennedy

Over the years many good dedicated people have come and gone and contributed in many ways to the administration of the club, the maintenance of the trails, the promotion of hikes. Few have done that, so diligently, in such a broad range of areas and for the length of time that Jan and Jamie Hember have! Their relationship with the GVTA started in 1997, when according to Jan and Jamie, they were looking "for something to do together that would involve the outdoors, exercise and fun". In the spring of that year, they took an introductory hiking course sponsored by their employer and the following spring, they completed their first end-to-end hike of the Grand Valley Trail! They were hooked!

Led hikes for 20 years

Jan and Jamie are not the type to sit on the sidelines! The following year, they attended their first AGM, and left the meeting with the task of developing the association's first website. In 1999, Jamie became a certified hike leader and for some 20 years, Jan was the consistent sweep for his hikes.

Trail maintenance for 10 plus years

In addition to leading hikes, trail maintenance was also a big part of their volunteering with the GVTA. Jan and Jamie were trail captains from Homer Watson to the Chicopee Hill for a few years and when Snyder's Flats re-opened, they assumed responsibility for the trail for ten years before it was closed again.

Active in a range of administrative functions

In 2005, Jan assumed the newsletter editor role with Jamie's support on the technical side. Jan remained on the board and undertook a broad range of projects including organizing volunteers to run two group end-to-end hikes, setting up a Volunteer Recognition initiative where GVTA volunteers received Kitchener, Waterloo and Brantford recognition awards as well as the provincial Ontario Service Awards. She also worked with the Board of Directors to create the organization's first Standing Rules, documentation that would set the direction for the organization. Jan was also active in the association's 40th anniversary celebrations that included hosting Hike Ontario's annual conference, followed by a gala event and dinner at Bingeman's.

GVTA's cartographer

Early in Jamie's involvement with the GVTA, he took map and compass courses offered by Greg Vincent. Since that time, Jamie has been involved in creating

graphics for event signs, trail signs, newsletter, reroute maps and website designs. To this day, Jamie continues to design trail signs and reroute maps used on the website, the guidebook and by Ondago.

Jan and Jamie's signature piece: The GVTA Guidebook

When asked what contribution are they most proud of, the answer was clear: the GVTA Guidebook. They not only produced the book but obtained the funding to produce it through TD Friends of the Environment grant, an important step that made it possible to produce the book in the first instance. The guidebook proved to be a much sought-after book: 1,500 copies were sold in the first 18 months! And not only did they produce and arrange the funding of it, they have, since its launch, managed the distribution of the guidebooks!

We are forever grateful for the extraordinary contribution made by Jan and Jamie Hember, their ongoing support of the club and their continued commitment to making the club successful.



Jan and Jamie Hember on the trail.

“The GVTA has opened experiences for us that took us all over Ontario, Baffin Island, and the UK. We have seen places and met wonderful people through our involvement with GVTA. It feels good to belong to an organization, like the GVTA, that has offered us what we were looking for in our retirement.”

March Trivia Quiz - Test Your knowledge!

Submitted by Emily Bennett

The GVTA has a long history of promoting hiking and managing trails along the Grand Valley. To test your knowledge of the GVT, we've created a trivia booklet and posted it on our [50th anniversary page](#)

31 questions are available – one to tackle every day this month.

Flip through the pages to test your knowledge about our Trail System. Here are some sample questions:

1. The GVTA and a National Historic Site in Haldimand County continue to collaborate on trail improvement. What is the historic site and where is it on the GVT?
2. Where is this photo taken along the GVT?



Answers to the questions above will be posted on the GVTA website April 1st.

Special thanks to the members who helped to put the trivia booklet together:

Anne Lowe

Jan Hember

Jamie Hember

Mary-Ellen Currie

Ryan Wicks

and the 50th Anniversary Volunteers

Help choose the new name for the northern trail section.

By Bill McDonald

“Pinnacle” is no longer a relevant name for the GVT’s northern section.

For many years, the northern terminus was on a hill in Alton called The Pinnacle, where the Grand Valley Trail connected with the Bruce Trail’s Alton Side Trail. While many kilometres of the GVT leading to Alton were on road, the section was still considered worthwhile because of the Bruce Trail connection. A few years ago, the Bruce Trail abolished the Alton Side Trail. Last year, the GVTA decided to abandon all that road walking to Alton and set the northern terminus in the village of Belwood. That makes “Pinnacle” an irrelevant name for our northern section, so the Board is looking for a suitable new name.

Now what?

We are looking for suggestions and opinions to help choose a new name. Some guidelines to naming the new trail section:

- * should be just one or two words, easy to spell and pronounce.
- * should survive possible future changes in the trail’s route.
- * could refer to the section’s historic or natural features.

Below, in alphabetical order, are some name suggestions:

1. Belwood (for the new terminus as of 2022)
2. Grand North

3. Grand Source
4. Headwaters
5. Shand (for the dam that created Belwood Lake in 1939 and was a historic precedent for other Ontario flood control dams, and also a prominent family in the area when the dam was built)
6. Upper Grand

What do you think?

Send us your ideas or preferences from the list to kwhiker@rambler.e4ward.com by March 31. The recommended name will be sent to the board for final endorsement in April.

**Spring is when you feel like whistling,
even with a shoe full of slush.**

- Doug Larson



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info@gvta.on.ca

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