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Trail Markings

GVTA newsletter

Fall 2020

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[Update from the Board](#)

by Annie Côté-Kennedy
President, GVTA

Update from the Board

Sadly, summer is coming to an end. And just like the start of our school year, September demarcates the start of the club year with our Board. The board had scheduled a planning meeting in early September to identify our priorities for the year. Since the meeting has not taken place at the time of writing the report, our plans for the year will be shared in our next newsletter.

I take this opportunity to thank all members who made time to attend our virtual AGM held earlier this month.

Highlights of the past year

- The end-to-end walks were very popular in 2019-2020. While it is not possible to keep records of the specific number of hikers, we can say that we have sold more end-to-end badges than ever: 19 end-to-end badges were purchased this year compared to a total of 14 in the previous four years!
- We have offered 75 hikes over the course of the year and a further 46 hikes were offered by GVTA member Petra Suffling. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, all hikes scheduled in the spring and summer were cancelled as well as the hike leader training program that had been booked for March.
- Several important volunteer roles were filled over the course of the year: Editor, Trail Markings; webmaster; Pinnacle Trail Director, several trail captains for the Carolinian trail section, and board secretary.
- The first edition of Trail Markings in an e-newsletter format was published. Thank you to Anita Smith, our new editor of Trail Markings. As well, the GVTA Facebook page continued to be an efficient way to connect hikers with our club activities. Thank you to Petra Suffling for keeping the page relevant and timely. Finally, we completed the review and updates to the website in October. Thank you Matthew Hodge for keeping the site current.

Looking ahead

- We continue to be challenged filling important roles on the Board. We are currently looking for a Hike Director and Trail maintenance, Vice-president. These are essential roles that will have a direct impact on our ability to fulfill our mandate should they remain open for an extended period of time. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions.
- Since Covid-19 forced us to suspend our organized hikes, we will be consulting with our hike leaders to see how best to resume our hiking program. Hike Ontario

has offered us a unique opportunity to pilot a virtual hike leader training program in September. We have several GVTA members registered to participate and as a result, we hope to be able to expand our hike offering in the near future.

- The club-led trail audit that was originally planned for the spring will proceed once the trail is considered safe by the audit organizers to walk in groups. We have received a very generous donation in the spring that has been earmarked to help fund the necessary improvements identified in the audit.
- Finally, the club will be marking its 50th Anniversary in 2022. Planning for the year will begin shortly! If you are interested in helping, please email me at president@gvta.on.ca!

Volunteer of the Year!

At the AGM on September 15th the Board congratulated the Volunteer of the Year Award recipients listed here.

- **Theresa Markus** for her overall volunteerism
- **Didier Thevenard** for his hike leadership and
- **David Martin** for his trail maintenance work not only as a Trail Captain, but also assisting Nick Kuret whenever help is needed.

Thank you to all volunteers for making our organization run smoothly and a special congratulations to this year's winners!

The GVTA is completely run by volunteers; from board members to hike leaders and from trail maintenance workers to our webmaster, newsletter editor; we are all members who volunteer to help manage the club and the trails. We are always looking for volunteers to help out with short-term projects or to take on some of the ongoing roles required to run the club and to maintain the trails in good order. Register to volunteer online by going to GVTA.ON.CA and click on the Volunteer tab.

Nature's 5 Gifts to Fall Hikers

by Anita Smith

Most members of GVTA are happy to go hiking in all seasons, and in all types of conditions. The autumn is a special time of year, however, with nature providing extra incentive (as if we needed any) to enjoy the wondrous outdoors!



1. Fewer bugs

After a summer of swatting at mosquitoes and deer flies we can now look forward to fewer bugs! Of course, that doesn't mean *no* bugs. Nothing says "end of summer" more than the buzzing drone of the cicada high in a tree. This insect, whose name means buzzer in Latin, is a creature that spends most of its life (up to 17 years in some species) underground. Eventually, the nymph emerges, crawls up onto a trunk and molts. Looking to reproduce, the males buzz to attract females by vibrating tymbals, membranes on either side of its abdomen. On your next hike, listen for the love calls of this strange insect!

2. Flowers

Even during the fall there are many colorful blooms. Both asters and goldenrods dominate roadsides and old fields at this time of year. Asters have small, sunflower-like, purple, violet or white flowers and goldenrods are identified by their sprigs of tiny, yellow-gold flowers. These flowers anchor a diverse food web which includes honeybees, wasps, beetles, spiders, and hoverflies. One highly adapted fruit fly, the goldenrod gall fly, lays its eggs in the plant's stem, producing galls within which the larvae develop and overwinter. There is only one larva per gall, but a stem may have more than one gall. Even inside this protective dome, the larva faces the possibility of predation by parasitic wasps or even hungry chickadees during the winter.



3. Birds

During the fall you may have a better opportunity to spot that rare bird you have been watching for. Every year in the fall, millions of birds take to the skies to make the trek to warmer wintering areas in the south. Migrating birds can travel in flocks that number in the tens of thousands, and even the novice birder can find delight and excitement in a fall birding hike. A great egret was spotted regularly along the Grand River in the Bridgeport area of Kitchener this month.

4. Cooler air

Hiking this summer certainly challenged us to find ways to keep our cool in sweltering temperatures! Crisp fall weather makes for much better hiking temperatures. As daylight and darkness hours equalize during the autumnal equinox, the temperatures become less extreme. However, dressing in layers is always a good idea when hiking. During the fall, mornings can be damp and cool, but temperatures may quickly warm up and become toasty on a sunny day in October.

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5. Fall Colours

The next time you are quietly hiking through a golden stand of aspen trees, you may wonder, “how do they do this?” The colour shift is triggered by day length, rather than temperature or frost. As the days grow shorter, the trees begin to pull nutrients back into the tree for storage over the winter, and the production of chlorophyll shuts down. As the green fades, reds, yellows, and oranges that had been hiding there begin to show. The intensity of the colour will be more pronounced if there has been a good growing season with plenty of water and sunlight.

Nature’s gifts abound but you may have your own reasons for enjoying a fall hike. Whatever your motivation, happy trails!

Member Profiles

Andrew Weinacht and Joanna Pauls

by Emily Bennett



Andrew and Jo in action at a Trail Maintenance Event, June 2020. (photo -E.Bennett)

In this issue, let's meet new GVTA members and Trail Maintenance volunteers, Andrew Weinacht and his wife and partner, Joanna Pauls.

Both Andrew and Jo are avid runners and for the past five years, have been running along the Black Walnut section of our trail system.

Finding themselves with some spare time this year, they joined the GVTA and right away, offered to help with Trail Maintenance. Andrew spent eight years working for the Ministry of Natural Resources in portage maintenance (clearing trails, bridge building, reroutes etc.) in Algonquin Park. We had a critical issue with downed trees that needed resolving this summer, and both Andrew and Jo jumped at the opportunity to help and led the effort to remove the fallen trees.

Thanks, Andrew and Jo, and welcome to the GVTA!



Hiking Notes

Introducing self-guided GVTA hikes by *Heather Rennie*

Did you know there are several self-guided hike options listed on the GVTA website? (<http://www.gvta.on.ca/HIKES-ON-NEAR-THE-GVTA.htm>) This is a great way to learn about new hike ideas to explore on your own and perhaps discover a new section of the GVTA trail! Details on the website include a quick overview of the hikes and a map of the route.

One self-guided hike I enjoy starts at the Woolner Trail on the eastern edge of Kitchener and leads to Otterbein. To get there, follow Fairway Rd. towards the bridge over the Grand River, and turn right on Woolner Trail at the roundabout. There's a small parking lot on the left hand side near the end of the road. Walk down the gravel trail (travelling upstream) until you see a marker with white blazes on the right hand side. The trail is single file through a wooded area and follows directly along the picturesque Grand River. It's well-marked with white blazes and the terrain is relatively flat, with lots of interesting trees and views of the river.



Walking is the best medicine.

-Hippocrates



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