



Trail Markings

GVTA newsletter

Fall 2021

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Update from the Board

by Annie Côté-Kennedy

I hope you've had a great summer! While it may be sad to see the summer behind us, the fall does offer some great weather for hiking! Personally, I've been able to explore the trails in the Brantford area in early September, and it reminds me how beautiful our

part of the world is and how lucky we are to have these trails so accessible.

After a busy spring, plans were to take a short break from GVTA board activities in the summer, but plans – like rules – are meant to be broken or changed as the case may be! Here's an update on some of the activities that have come my way this summer:

- The board met in July to plan for the year ahead. The plan still needs to be fine-tuned but if you are interested, drop me a note and we'll send you a copy of the plan once finalized.

- We received a generous donation of \$1,050 from Joel Masewich, an artist, who donated a portion of the proceeds of his recent art sale to the Association. A special thank you to Joel for his support.

- We had a delegation at the Grand River Conservation Authority board of directors in July to discuss the trail in the Elora Gorge area and other GRCA properties. Following the board meeting, we also met with GRCA staff in August to further these discussions and explore the possibility of establishing a group access agreement. The Elora Gorge staff have shown an interest in working with the Association and we look forward to continue working with them to represent our members' interests.

- In August, Jason Thompson, VP, Trail Maintenance, Fred Standeven, Trail Director for Carolinian Crest, and I met with officials from the City of Brantford to initiate discussions relating to trail maintenance. Part of our strategic plan, is to develop relationships with municipality, townships and other public land owners to work collaboratively on trail maintenance and to promote greater awareness of the Association. The meeting was very productive and our Brantford maintenance team will now be meeting with the city's maintenance staff to review specific trail maintenance protocols.

- Work has also started to review and determine how best to proceed with the update to our Guidebook. To date, the preliminary work has focused on identifying resources needed to undertake the revision, researching costs to produce a Guidebook and to determine the course of action based on the research. We'll keep you posted on the future of the Guidebook as decisions are made.

Au revoir to Laura Anders

I am also announcing a change to our board of directors. Laura Anders, board treasurer, has recently announced her resignation from the board. Laura joined the Board in 2015 and has provided the Association with invaluable support throughout her tenure on the board. Her love of hiking, her calm and pragmatic style and her expertise in finance proved to be a perfect fit for the Treasurer position.

Laura is leaving after serving the maximum six consecutive years on the board, to pursue other activities and to have more time with her young family. When asked about her proudest accomplishment, Laura responded, "I feel that I managed to maintain my duties on the board over a period that was very busy in my life, with the birth of both my daughters, Teagan and Avery." We agree! Thank you, Laura!

Welcome Lisa Stewart

We are very pleased to announce that Lisa Stewart has been appointed as the new Treasurer. Lisa comes highly qualified for this new role. She is a Chartered Professional Accountant with public accounting and public sector experience. She is currently a senior financial analyst with Spotify and an avid hiker! Please join me in welcoming Lisa in her new role!

We need your help

Finally, I am closing by urging you to please consider volunteering to help with the upcoming anniversary plans. See Emily Bennett's article for more details!

As you may have noticed we have slowly starting to resume our organized hikes. I take this time to wish you many enjoyable hikes this fall!

Remembering Gwen Howlett

by Annie Côté-Kennedy

It is with sadness that we announce the death of **Gwen Howlett**, a founding member of the Grand Valley Trails Association and president of the club from 1984 to 1993.

Gwen passed away on Friday, August 20th in her 99th year. As a young woman, Gwen spent three years studying at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and sang opera semi-professionally, led choirs and taught piano. Later in life, she returned to school and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English at the age of 54.

She was a woman of indomitable spirit. Adventurous, her travels took her to Europe, Panama, New Zealand and Australia. Closer to home she loved her Nahanni River adventure and visits to Killarney and Temagami. For many years she enjoyed walking on Grand River Trails, She served on the board of the GVTA as president and was instrumental in bringing the trail past Brantford. She wrote a book about the trails in Brantford. A beautiful pianist, she entertained her family and co-residents with her playing. Even at the age of 98 she was hard to beat at Scrabble.

Gwen is survived by her four children, nine grandchildren and several great grandchildren.

Hiking Updates

by Petra Suffling

New Hike Leaders: Congratulations and a very warm welcome to our first two new hike leaders this year, Theresa Markus and Kevin Kennedy (pictured below), They will be an excellent addition to our team. We look forward to others who will be completing their qualifications as hike leaders shortly.

More new hike leaders are still needed, as several of our excellent leaders have now retired after many years of providing numerous highly enjoyable and informative outings. While they continue to make invaluable contributions to the hiking community behind the scenes, we need others to step up and lead the hikes. Please contact Petra Suffling at hikes@gvta.on.ca for information on becoming a certified hike leader.



Hike Resumption: We look forward to seeing everyone again as we are finally able to resume our hiking schedule. Hikes are being posted from time to time on our GVTA calendar: <https://www.gvta.on.ca/HikesEvents.htm> so check regularly for new additions. The usual Covid protocols will be in effect - masking at assembly and wherever 2m distancing is a challenge. Online waiver / registration / Covid self-assessment forms are being used in order to avoid handing around sign-up sheets. Leaders each choose their own group size within the legal limit.

Family Hikes are a valuable new addition to our hiking program, to be offered on or about the last Sunday of each month. These will introduce families to easy walks with lots to see, explore and learn about on the way. We have a highly capable small team working on this project, and they will welcome more members. If you would like to join them please contact Petra Suffling at hikes@gvta.on.ca The first family hike will be in a very diverse and interesting part of the Grand Valley Trail at Kolb Park on September 26th., being led by Brenda Wiegand and Didier Thevenard. Check the calendar periodically for upcoming family hike postings: <https://www.gvta.on.ca/HikesEvents.htm>

Badges for GVT continue to be in demand, with eight hikers completing the End-to End since February, and others earning badges for segments of the trail.



BusyVolunteers

by Emily Bennett

Many hands make light work! I am happy to share some photos from a trail maintenance event last July. Tony Kelly (pictured left) is a Trail Captain for the Carolinian Crest section. He worked with the Trail Director, Fred Standeven, to request a small work party to clear out the overgrowth and stinging nettles near our trail just off Waterworks Park.



We created a small work party and divided into two teams to work each part of the trail. The work was quick and we were lucky in that it stayed cool enough to work.

Tony sends his thanks to Eva, Emily, Nick and Darren for their hard work.



Volunteering for the 50th Anniversary

by Emily Bennett

In this issue of Trail Markings, I wanted to start the conversation about planning the GVTA's 50th Anniversary. We have so many things to celebrate in our association and want to ensure that we capture a variety of activities that will appeal to our members and their families.

The Board has started a 'Year of Celebratory Events' calendar for 2022 where we have suggested a variety of activities to celebrate hiking, trail maintenance and volunteering. An example of some of the events include: Photo Contest to tie into National Photography Day, and family hikes on Family Day, Trail Maintenance activities during Volunteer Week / Earth Day. We also have some special events planned that will be revealed at a later date.

We are calling upon our membership and volunteers to help in the planning and

execution of the various events. One of our goals is to have some of the events run concurrently in all trail sections (for example, creating neighbourhood trail cleanup events) and that takes many hands!

If you like to take photos, plan events (party planning anyone?), do workshops or presentations, like to keep track of things, or want to help out with one or more events, send an email to volunteering@gvta.on.ca. All planned events will adhere to any or all public health guidelines.

Help us make this anniversary memorable!

P.S. We are also looking for a Trail Maintenance volunteer. If you are interested, please send an email to volunteering@gvta.on.ca

The world reveals itself to those who travel on foot.

Werner Herzog