

Trail Markings

GVTA newsletter

Spring 2021

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Update from the Board

by Annie Côté-Kennedy

Spring is in the air and with the longer days and extended daylight hours comes a little optimism that maybe this pandemic will soon be under control and we will return to some degree of normalcy in the near future. As a club, we are doing work behind the scenes to prepare for that day! Here's what we've been doing on different fronts:

Trail maintenance

Following the trail audit that Jan Hember and Jane Kenyon coordinated in the fall, we are now setting up a formal project plan to address and track the status of issues identified in the audit. We're pleased to announce that volunteer, Jason Thompson, has accepted the role of Project Manager, Trail Audit.

A resident of Elora, Jason is also a board member of the Centre Wellington Community Foundation and currently works at the University of Waterloo as Faculty of Science Liaison for Teaching Excellence. In his new role, he will work directly with the trail directors to help make the necessary changes and enhancements to the trail, ensuring the trail directors have the necessary support, people and resources to carry out the work.

Emily Bennett, Director of Volunteering and Membership, will work closely with Jason to orient Jason to the workings of the GVTA, recruit the necessary maintenance volunteers, and set up work parties that are required to get the work done. Welcome Jason and thank you to Emily!



(L) Jason Thompson, new Project Manager, Trail Audit, met with Ryan Wicks, Trail Director for the Black Walnut section. Jason will be working with the trail directors to help carry out the maintenance work that was identified in the trail audit.



Hiking Tales and Talks

The *Hiking Tales and Talks* is a three-part virtual series featuring guest speakers and presentations on various topics and issues. We had a record number of registrants for our first **Hiking Tales and Talks** with Nicola Ross on March 9. The virtual meetings are held on the second Wednesday of March, April and May. If you missed Nicola's talk and would like to know more about her popular *Loops and Latte* guide, read the review and details below!

On April 14, join our *Hiking Tales and Talks* with Maddalena Molino and Robert Eschenasi, co-owners of Comfortable Hiking Holidays. Maddalena and Robert have led guided hiking tours in exciting destinations such as Italy, France, Japan, Kenya, Ireland and the Galapagos Islands, to name a few. They will cover topics such as their most frequently asked questions, the future of hiking tours and travel going forward, entice you with a few words about some of their more exotic destinations such as the

Galapagos Islands, Kenya and Japan, and even recount the experience of leading their popular Portugal holiday right when the pandemic was declared!

Registration will be limited – so please sign up early!

Highlighting our end-to-end trekkers

While this is not one of *our* accomplishments, we want to celebrate and recognize the people who have recently taken the challenge of doing the Grand Valley Trail end-to-end. From April 1 2020 to now, 13 people have completed the trail end-to-end! Meet some of these trekkers:



Qingqing Tao and his group are avid hikers. Shown here in Elora, they have completed four major trails end-to-end since 2016, including the Bruce trail, Ganaraska Hiking Trail and Oak Ridges Trail. While the pandemic made planning more challenging, the group appreciated the opportunity “to breathe fresh air, enjoy nature and exercise”.



John Chalmers (third from left) completed the end to end in record time from October to December 2020. Shown here with some of his infamous mates (l to r), Brad Sararus (completed the El Camino hike), Ian Evens (skied 1,000 km to the South Pole), John Chalmers (hiked Hadrian's Wall end-to-end) and Ranj Feduck (had a speaking part in Apocalypse Now).



Recently retired Joanne Regan also completed the end-to-end trail in record time starting in early September and ending in mid-November. With the Covid restrictions in place, she and companions Phil Leger and Greg Cain found the fall the perfect opportunity to take on this 'project'. For Joanne, some of the many highlights (other than mile zero and the end-point marker!) were the historical plaques in the south end of the trail, the variety of terrains and the beauty of the trail along the Grand River.

GVTA 50th anniversary

Finally, we need to start planning in detail our anniversary year that is fast approaching! Indeed the club was started in 1972 and incorporated in 1973. We celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2012. Interested in helping us mark this important upcoming milestone? We have some ideas and we need more ideas and more importantly we need volunteers to

help us with the plans!

Were you a member when the club was first formed? Do you have old pictures and memorabilia? Do you have good organizational skills? Are you an amateur photographer? Good planner? Designer? You name the skill, we will need it! Plans are to get a committee working on this as soon as possible!

To volunteer please send me an email now at president@gvta.on.ca! We welcome your suggestions and ideas on the workings and priorities of the board, and topics of interest for future editions of Trail Markings!

Happy hiking!

Loops & Lattes Hikes

by

Emily

Bennett

In this issue of Trail Markings, I wanted to share my review of two books in the Loops and Lattes Hiking Guides series: *Hamilton and Area Hikes*, written by Nicola Ross, and *Waterloo and Wellington & Guelph Hikes* written by Nicola Ross and Amy Darrell. There are six books in the series and these are the two guides that cover some of the GVTA trails.

I purchased the books on the advice of a fellow hiker. Although I have the GVTA Guidebook and have taken several hikes with talented and knowledgeable GVTA hike leaders, I wanted to know more about local hikes. I've lived in the KW area for over 15 years, and I'm still amazed at having nature so close by.

Each of the books has over thirty mostly loop-type hikes that can be done to explore the area covered. For each hike, you'll see the usual information such as hike length, level of difficulty, points of interest and starting point, in addition to % of time on the road, best time of year to take that hike and places to eat/drink before/after/during the hike. I found the information very helpful if you're trying to plan a hike with family or your social bubble.

Each hike starts with a descriptive overview with input from contributors who provided the information. You'll read about some of our own Hike Leaders who provided guidance and

information on GVTA trails. It makes for perfect reading for cold wintery days when you are anxious to get outside. I've got several hikes ear-marked for the upcoming season. The photographs included for each hike also entice the reader. Who knew there were so many waterfalls to explore in the Hamilton area?

Nicola has generously offered to donate \$5 from every book sale from the Loops & Lattes series directly to the GVTA. To take advantage of this offer, order from the loopsandlattes.ca website, then when you checkout, type *GVTA* in the **Order Notes** field before payment.

Don't forget to follow Nicola on her blog at nicolaross.ca

Food Drive

-by Mary Ellen Currie

In lieu of our annual Festive Dinner, a Food Drive was held on Sunday, December 6th to benefit the Food Bank, which experienced a significant increase in emergency food assistance requests since the beginning of the pandemic. With a modest goal of collecting 100 pounds of food, GVTA Board members set up donation drop-offs at locations in Brantford, Kitchener and Waterloo to collect food and monetary donations. Your generosity far exceeded our expectations, including a surprise contribution from Cart2curb. A total of \$611.43 (including online donations) was raised along with 680 pounds of food. Our donation meant we were able to provide 2,365 meals to the 1 in 20 households facing food insecurity. The Food Bank thanked us for our support in making their work possible.



Farewell to Rob Carlton

by Annie Côté-Kennedy

It is with sadness, that we announce the death of Rob Carlton, a long-time member, a very active volunteer and a dear friend of the GVTA. A dedicated GVTA volunteer, he gave years of service to the club.

For nine years, Rob volunteered in various capacities. He was trail captain, trail director, responsible for landowner relations, member of construction crews. He led hikes, participated in strategic planning and organized special events. He was active in maintaining the entire GVT and cultivated relations with landowners. He knew the trail exceptionally well and was well-informed about the lands the GVTA passed through and the landowners' issues.

For six years, he was on the board of directors. His contributions on the Board and the strategic planning committee were appreciated by other board members for their relevance and insightfulness.

In the last few years of his life, health issues kept him from being active on the trail but his contributions and legacy remained.

Rest in peace Rob. You will be missed.



Rob Carlton, third from left, was an active member of the Grand Valley Trails Association. Shown here in 2012 with the Middleport reroute crew from l. to r.: Rob Fowly, Walter Soroka, Rob and Al Bennett. A truly all-in GVTA member, he gave great years of service to the club. Rob passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday, November 17 in this 79th year.

A rainy day is the perfect time for a walk in the woods.

-Rachel Carson