

# The Rattler



## President's Message

ISSUE #2 2017

Spring and summer have been very busy for the club thanks to the more than thirty volunteers who helped with all the activities! It started with the AGM/Spruce up the Bruce day in May, the fourteen day baton relay and cleaning and prep for the 50th Anniversary which was wonderfully run by the BTC team. The 50K Challenge ran two weeks later in terrible weather. Well done to all those who participated in rain, hail and 12 degree cold! Again the volunteers were there getting wet with the hikers.

We have been blessed with extravagant gifts and we were able to express our thanks at three events, again supported by volunteers, the marvelous donation of Cape Dundas by David and Nancy Pease, unveiling the plaque at the Bull Homestead remembering Bob and Sue Light's gift which was used to obtain the Light Nature Reserve and the unveiling of the sign on the Cape Croker Snake Boardwalk in recognition of the five donors for funding that project. Volunteers supported each of these by cutting grass and installing plaques.

The fun continues! Lead by Bridget Rosser and Susan Allen a once only "Bus Hike" will provide ninety-six hikers a chance to complete the end to end over four weekends starting in August. This project took many hours to plan and it will take many more volunteers to work as organizers. Thanks to our team for clearing the trails, the wet weather has encouraged prolific forest growth.

At the AGM we reviewed our activities and showed a budget that is very skinny with no room for special projects. Therefore, a fund raiser was introduced to meet a need for toilet facilities at the Devil's Monument property\*. High summer traffic has shown that there is a need for general grounds maintenance and such a facility. However, it is not in the operating budget of the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula or any other local government that benefits from increased visitors. So with the funds raised the Club arranged for one unit for this year only. We feel it is important for the County and the MNBPC to provide facilities at high traffic locations. Please ask your elected officials to review this need and include it in their budget for 2018.

Many members of the Board of Directors have retired. We said thanks for many years of support from Jamie Hember, Dave Watson, Jim Woods, David Clipsham, Ken Clark, Sheila Buckingham, Bridget Rosser and Deborah Sturdevant. Each of these people gave many hours to the club and we appreciate all the work and accomplishments. Each one will be missed for their contribution and their support to the Board. We welcome Kathryn Burns as a member-at-large.

It must be obvious that we have opportunities on the Board! We are moving our meetings to Sunday afternoons to allow for new members who find our traditional Monday meetings inconvenient. Maybe this is what you have been waiting for? Join us at a meeting just for fun – the next one is Sunday, September 10th at 1:00 pm in the Police Station Community Room, Wiarton.

*Walter Brewer President PBTC*

*\* see page 11 for more details*



*Multiple Dryad Saddles - see page 18 for more info*

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**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS**

Any articles or stories of interest?

Deadline for submissions to next Rattler:

**"November 7, 2017"**

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The current executive team of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club can be found on our website: [www.pbtc.ca](http://www.pbtc.ca)

## Recollections of a Volunteer - Peninsula Club in the Early 21st Century

*by Don McIlraith*

One of the many attractions of the Bruce Peninsula which appealed to both my wife Joan and me was the presence of the Bruce Trail, so shortly after we moved here from Sudbury in 2000 we joined and offered our services as volunteers. We were soon assigned a rugged but particularly beautiful trail section from Little Cove to Driftwood Cove. The section needed a lot of work and we were blessed with a big work party to help bring it back in shape. A big bonus of that day was meeting several volunteers who have turned out over the following years to be very good friends. We never finished in under six hours but always came home with a new experience such as visiting the huge sinkhole at the south end or having chats with visitors along the trail from all over the world marveling over our scenic 'wilderness'. Of course after thirty years of Outers trips in Northern Ontario we didn't really think we were in wilderness on the Bruce.

Bruce Trail volunteering is, to many, an addictive practice and we were drawn further into the work over time so within a couple of years we found ourselves in charge of the twice yearly road clean-up and I found myself on the club board as Land Stewardship Director succeeding John Greenhouse as he moved into Vice President and then President.

The Land Stewardship program had been operating as an informal mix with land securement but was established in 1997 as both BTA committee and as a club official directorship initially under John Appleton. The program along with the addition of more properties was growing rapidly requiring more land stewards, more information management and more jobs: both managerial and practical. One of the very practical challenges was the Haddock cottage demolition on the property on the escarpment edge on the north side of Hope Bay.

Beginning work in October, 2006, several volunteers began the work of demolition removing kitchen cupboards, wall boards, cork ceiling tiles and much of the plumbing. Over the next couple of colder and colder visits the old Franklin stove and the massive brick base and backing wall were broken away and carried out leaving the remaining shell until spring.

Returning in April we removed the insulation and the steel roof only to discover a shingled roof underneath. We removed the windows and cedar siding but little of these were salvageable.

The big fir beams took lots of care and muscle, and removing thousands of nails from the lumber and sheeting took lots of patience and time. By July the building mate-

rials were down and taken away. August saw the foundation filled and graded, the site raked and the seedlings already taking hold as natural reclamation took over.

Over 20 volunteers logged over 180 hours of work in 19 visits to this site. Some of the scrap metal, lumber, windows, beams and insulation were salvaged and taken by some of the participants. Thanks to Ontario Parks which would be receiving the property as part of Hope Bay Nature Reserve, the garbage was removed in several landfill runs and they also arranged for the fill and final site grading.

The donations to BTA related to the project totalled just under \$1,000.00 so the project actually generated income with the project expenses such as landfill fees and fill and grading being covered by Ontario Parks.

The many volunteers included: Uwe Wassermann, Barry Eveleigh, Roger Plomley, Gerald Seltzer, Jim Macdonald, Grant Ehrhardt, John and Donna Baker, John and Judy Appleton, Bill Hansen, John Lillie, Findlay Morrison, David Murray, Rick Roman, Stuart Burgess, George Telfer, Bob Lesperance, Joan McIlraith.

The work of land stewardship continues to the present with the benefit of a much wider group of volunteers under present Land Stewardship Director Bob Cunningham.

By 2007 I found myself reluctantly in the position of Vice President as well as still Land Stewardship Director, obviously expected to move into President in two years, so by 2009 I was elected President. One of the biggest tasks of 2009 was our Club's responsibility to host the entire Bruce Trail Conservancy AGM in September (having changed the name from Association in 2007). Thanks to the superb organization by the committee under Director Darcy Lombard this group had been actively planning the joint BTC AGM and our own, annual fall Outdoor Festival. The huge program came together and was highlighted by the dinner, awards ceremony and cruise aboard the Chi Cheemaun on a stunningly warm sunny evening. Bruce Trailers raved about the event long afterwards.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of my experience on our club board was the opportunity to meet and work with a large number of superb volunteers. At one point we estimated that upwards of one quarter of club members actually had a volunteer role of some sort. For our largely senior and retired demographic that is huge, considering that many of them actually travel frequently from the south to assist in club operations. Volunteers continue to be the life blood of the organization.



## PBTC BIRDING HIKE

May 17, 2017 turned out to be a warm sunny day, if just a bit windy, for the Peninsula Club's annual birding hike. Anita and Bob Cunningham were joined by 19 other birders and want-to-be birders for a wonderful day of birding in the Dyer's Bay area. The number of birders in attendance was a modern day record. Several had joined us just to see what birding was all about and by the end of the day we heard reports that we had some converts to this wonderful pastime. If the sun shining on that beautiful bluebird was not enough for you to want to see more, then this is not the activity for you!

While the number of species we saw (47) was a bit lower than in previous years we did have some wonderful sightings including a Bald Eagle who flew over at lunch – perhaps he was hungry, an Eastern Towhee and a Scarlet Tanager, unfortunately seen by only a small number of the group. Warblers, in particular, were few and far between, but that is simply a result of the spring migration not reaching Northern Bruce in a timely way. A cold spring probably slowed things down.

And a special thanks should go to Bill Hansen for taking time out of his day to meet us on the Dyer's Bay wharf with his scope and pointing out several hard to spot species.

Here is the list of what we did see and/or hear.

Common Loon	Red-necked Grebe	American Bittern
Canada Goose	Mallard	Red-breasted Merganser
Turkey Vulture	Bald Eagle	Northern Harrier
Cooper's Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Merlin
Ring-necked Pheasant	Wild Turkey	Sandhill Crane
Solitary Sandpipe	Spotted Sandpiper	Wilson's Snipe
Ring-billed Gull	Herring Gull	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Northern Flicker	Eastern Phoebe	Eastern Kingbird
Tree Swallow	Barn Swallow	Blue Jay
American Crow	Black-capped Chickadee	Red-breasted Nuthatch
House Wren	Eastern Bluebird	American Robin
Brown Thrasher	European Starling	Yellow Warbler
American Redstart	Ovenbird	Scarlet Tanager
Eastern Towhee	Chipping Sparrow	Savannah Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow	Red-winged Blackbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Common Grackle	American Goldfinch	

Thanks to all the birders who came out this year and contributed their eyes and ears to our excellent adventure. Anita and I look forward to seeing you all again next year. If you couldn't join us this year but have even a slight interest in our avian friends then why not pencil in Wednesday May 16, 2018 on your calendar. That's the tentative date for next year. It's a lot of fun and there is NO EXPERTISE REQUIRED!!

*Anita and Bob Cunningham*

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## Bob and Susan Light Donor Recognition

- ◇ The unveiling of a plaque in recognition of Bob and Susan Light for all their support of the Bruce Trail (Iroquoia and Peninsula) and their generous donation which was used to fund the purchase of the Light Nature Reserve near Tobermory. Special thank you to Susan's sister, Jane, and brother-in-law, Greg, for travelling from Connecticut to be part of the event.



So, I said to my pileated friend, “Wow, nice work. Way to use your noggin”. To which he replied, “Rich, this proves that you can sometimes whack your head repeatedly against a hard object, and still have a desirable outcome!”. Who knew?

Richard D. Moccia  
Peninsula Sawyer



*(cont'd from page 3)*

The years in which I was on our board were in hind sight revolutionary times. Commentators are now asserting that 2007, the year of the I-phone introduction may represent as significant a technical turning point as the Gutenberg press in its day. We didn't particularly discuss this aspect of our times up here in the hinterland but we did recognize that with the growth of properties in both number and size, the growth of trail distance and sections, and the increase in membership all represented a significant addition to volunteer work load. The technical changes gave rise to a huge increase in the amount and complexity of data we needed to master and manage. Thankfully over time we managed to redistribute some of the work load by bringing in new volunteers to assist. We also were able to restructure the club's work. John Appleton's original Trail Director position has morphed into the six positions. The Land Stewardship Director's position has evolved into three positions plus a field crew. The Rattler newsletter has changed into the Rattler Committee of editors, layout, sales person and distribution volunteers.

The digital age has brought with it many fascinating developments such as social media, GPS and computer mapping

and database management but each innovation brings the need for training and the cost of adoption, as well as the challenges of some level of standardization among all nine clubs and central BTC.

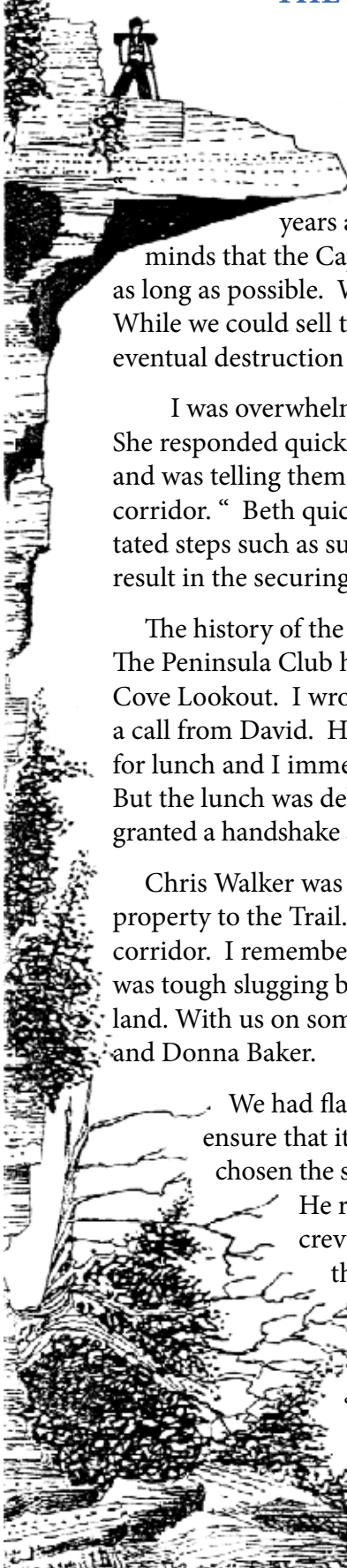
Many of us began retirement thinking volunteering would be simple and easy. We have seen the promise of social media like the Arab Spring but the down side has also emerged including the more recent sometimes irresponsible and harmful Twitter fingers spreading fear and propaganda.

An ongoing initiative I found most interesting but also challenging was the efforts of our club to define and act on our role as an integral part of our communities of North and South Bruce Peninsula. Begun by John Greenhouse we developed an illustrated short explanation of the Bruce Trail mission and presence. This was adapted and presented to many groups including local councils. We worked hard at establishing working relationships with councils and staff, chambers of commerce, tourist organizations and business groups. This is hard work but we found it paid off in the long run. The mission of Bruce Trail is better known and understood as a result.



## THE PEASE PROPERTY DONATION - A MAGNIFICENT GIFT

*By Ross McLean*



In early November, 2016 I received an email from David and Nancy Pease, landowners of about 200 acres at Cape Dundas. The email read: “Because you were our first contact with the Bruce Trail Association so many years ago I want you to be the first to know our thinking. There is little doubt in our minds that the Cape Dundas property is a very special place and it is our wish that it remain so for as long as possible. We would like to donate this property to the Bruce Trail [Conservancy]. While we could sell the property, receiving significant financial returns, this would only result in the eventual destruction of this jewel on the Bruce.”

I was overwhelmed by the Pease’s generosity and immediately called Beth Gilhespy. She responded quickly: “Thank you for this wonderful news. I was just with a group at Cape Dundas and was telling them how wonderful the landowner was, and how important was the land to our corridor.” Beth quickly called David and the donation procedure began immediately. That necessitated steps such as surveying, appraisal, and the legal paperwork of land transfer. The donation would result in the securing of a major section of trail.

The history of the BTC’s relationship with the Pease family goes back about fifteen years. The Peninsula Club had built an isolated side trail on land it had acquired, leading to the Jackson’s Cove Lookout. I wrote an article for *The Rattler* praising its beauty and shortly afterwards received a call from David. He asked me simply, “Why don’t you put such a trail on my land?” He invited me for lunch and I immediately accepted. It was a blustery winter’s day and I got stuck in their driveway. But the lunch was delicious and we had a fascinating conversation about the property. The Trail was granted a handshake agreement and that began what over the years was a very supportive relationship.

Chris Walker was the BTA’s Trail Director at the time and we realized the importance of the property to the Trail. Chris had a home in the Peninsula so that winter we went north to scout a trail corridor. I remember that on six different days we trudged through snow to learn about the land. It was tough slugging but with no leaves on the trees, it is actually much easier to see the contours of the land. With us on some of these explorations were veteran BTA members such as John and Sue Lillie and Donna Baker.

We had flagged a route and before building the Trail, asked David Pease to come north to ensure that it met with his approval. I remember him stopping us once to ask why we had chosen the specific route we had. Our answer, I think, was that it was simply an easy corridor. He responded that we should look towards the scarp face where there was a series of crevice caves. He knew the land much better than we did, and that option became the chosen route.

Then on a Spruce Up the Bruce weekend, that May, 2004 we had about 45 volunteers open the trail in one day. They were divided into six teams and each completed their work by mid-afternoon. Then we used all that help in a “bucket brigade” to carry flagstones across the wet alvar to create a raised treadway. Some of us then headed to Lion’s Head for a celebratory beverage.

*(cont’d on page 7)*

(cont'd from page 6)

Two of the volunteers, Sandra Purchase and Tove Fynbo, came to me at day's end and pleaded to become the trail captains for the property; they simply had fallen in love with its beauty. They continued in that role for about ten years; each spring they would head north with a group of friends to spend a day on the Trail. The Peases were regularly informed of their care for the Trail and the love they had for the land. Both Sandra and Tove became good friends of some BTC members (they traveled about four times to Saba with the Lillies and my wife and me to build trail in the Caribbean.) Then Sandra developed cancer. I am still moved by the story of her last visit: she was too ill to hike the trail, but while her friends did the work, she sat in the warmth of the sun beside the parking area. She wanted to help with "her" trail but all she could do was some trimming for the first fifty feet. Nonetheless, it was so satisfying to her to have that last visit. After her death, a memorial hike was held on this land; in attendance were family, friends and Bruce Trail members. Sandra was such a loving person; it was a fitting tribute to who she was.

The relationship with the Peases continued strong, with communication from a variety of BTC personnel. For example, I remember another luncheon invitation about three years ago when John Whitworth and I travelled to the Pease's farm for an interview. The result which some of our readers hopefully remember was an article in *The Rattler* in which David explained

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### Pease Family Donation of Cape Dundas Property

why he would share his land with others who appreciated its beauty.

This donation is an extremely important step in securing the Trail at Cape Dundas. In the 1960s there was some initial opposition to the idea of a trail; local residents feared the imposition of provincial government controls on their land. The initial Bruce Trail route in 1967 had to cut inland on a road allowance and then cottage road to the south shore of Barrow Bay. Then in 1978 the Preliminary Proposal of the Niagara Escarpment Commission defined Cape Dundas as one of the two most important areas along the Niagara Escarpment for securement. Of course, the result was no acquisition but higher land prices!

But since then the Bruce Trail has made some amazing gains. East from the Hope Bay Forest to the Jackson's Cove Road is now secured (except for one loyal landowner with whom we have very positive relations; she is currently one of our trail captains.) Then from the parking area at the road we continue on Bruce Trail land (with one small piece owned by our friends at the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy). That reaches the Pease property which leads north and west along a short road allowance on the shoreline to the Chris Walker Nature Reserve.

This outline, I hope, illustrates how important is the Pease donation in securing this optimum route. The area is a vivid example of what the Bruce Trail can accomplish in land preservation over time. It is a gift which should be loudly celebrated in our 50th year.



Cape Dundas property donation by the Pease Family recognized on June 11 th.



Installing the plaque in preparation for the Cape Dundas Nature Reserve dedication Sunday, June 11th. L to R: Dale Avis, Lloyd Hayward, Geoff Cunliffe, Grant Ehrhardt and Alan Bobo



## SABLE ISLAND ADVENTURE - Anita & Bob Cunningham

Sable Island is a part of Nova Scotia located in the Atlantic Ocean 300 km. south east of Halifax and about 36 hours by ship (Ocean Endeavour) from St. John's NL. The island is about 42 km. long and 1.5 km. across at its widest point and is protected and managed by Parks Canada as a National Park Reserve.

How do we know all this? Well, back in April 2017 the Bruce Trail Conservancy ran their BTC Adventure Auction and we were the highest bidder for a trip for two to Sable Island.

Why did we pick Sable Island? This is one of those out-of-the-way places we love to visit and what better way to celebrate Canada's 150th than to head off to a Canadian location almost nobody else has been to. And what a great choice that was! Thanks to Adventure Canada, who ran the trip, and to all the staff and crew aboard ship, this was probably the best trip of our lives.

As mentioned above, Sable Island is a long narrow sand dune in the Atlantic Ocean and due to winds, currents and tides its shoreline is constantly changing so its dimensions change as well. In years gone by it was known as "the graveyard of the Atlantic" due to the large number of shipwrecks in the area. It emerges from vast shoals and shallows on the continental shelf which, in tandem with fog and sudden storms, historically has resulted in over 350 shipwrecks.



On the island we encountered wild horses, grey & harbour seals, birds, grasses, plants, a rescue station no longer used and SAND DUNES. The only residents on the island are a few Parks Canada officers. The sand dunes are partly covered with marram grass and an assortment of wildflowers. This vegetation is the only food for the 450 or so wild horses. There are also several fresh water ponds used by the horses for drinking water but when the ponds dry up the horses will dig holes with their

hooves until they reach fresh water. The mortality rate for the horses is high during the winter so many years ago efforts were made to feed them. However they refused to eat the imported hay and instead reverted to digging up the marram grass from under the snow. Today the horses are treated as wild animals and no human intervention with them is allowed. Despite all this the horse population on Sable Island is stable and perhaps even rising a bit over time.

Currently no visitors are allowed on Sable Island without prior approval so we count ourselves lucky to be amongst the privileged few. In the future it is entirely possible the island and its fragile ecosystems may be off limits to everyone. So if you get an opportunity to visit this special place we highly recommend it. Where else can you hear the beaches squeaking under foot because the sand granules are so round?

We have hundreds of photos and countless great memories. Thanks should go to the Bruce Trail Conservancy, Adventure Canada and the Captain and crew of the Ocean Endeavour for this great opportunity.





## Tom and Laura, the Dynamic Duo

Between the two of them, Tom Hall and Laura Browne have hiked: in Canada: the Bruce Trail, the East Coast Trail, the Ganaraska Trail, the Grand Valley Trail, La Cloche Silhouette Trail, the Maitland Trail, the Rideau Trail, the Thames Valley Trail, and the West Coast Trail. In the USA: they are working on the Appalachian Trail and have done the John Muir Trail, California. Internationally: they have hiked Australia; Beara Way, Ireland; Coastal Causeway, Ireland; New Zealand; Kintyre Way, Scotland; and Switzerland. What journey led them from these far flung points to our own beautiful Bruce Peninsula?

Laura grew up in Willowdale, North York, a very suburban area with vacant lots nearby, and a ravine not too far away by bicycle, where she and her sister could hurl themselves into a tributary of the Don River off a rope swing. She was always very outdoorsy, a tomboy even. Her favourite place was a 10-acre woodlot near Uxbridge where she and her sister built forts, trails, and swings. They were generally set free to explore, only being lured back to the parents with promises of peanut butter sandwiches. Her family began with Provincial Park camping, then canoe trips, then backpacking trips. She went to summer camp (Sparrow Lake United Church Camp) for seven years from the age of 9. By contrast, Tom was not an outdoorsy child but was involved in sports, mostly baseball, and skating in the backyard. He was raised in Niagara Falls and his family had a cottage on the Mississippi River near Lanark, but did not do family camping or hiking. Tom started hiking with the BTY2K (a millennium project). They met on the Wilderness section of the Ganaraska Trail in the spring of 2008. Tom was the hike leader of a group of about 21 hikers. They moved to the Bruce from the City of the Kawartha Lakes, a misnomer because it was no city (and where they lived, there was no lake!). They lived about 3 km south of the town of Woodville, about 7 km east of Cannington, where Laura taught chemistry for 25+ years and Tom worked in Health Care.

The journey that led them to the Bruce was determined by their hiking lifestyle. An opportunity presented itself when a friend, who owned the cabin on the site of their present house, put his place up for sale. Laura had worked, briefly, as an intern at the Bruce County Outdoor Education Centre, west of Wiarton, in the early 80s with some pretty spectacular mentors, hiked the Peninsula section on days off, and always vowed to come back for a longer time. (Who knew, that would be retirement!) People have asked them how they can endure living here year-round. In the summer, they do a lot of Peninsula Bruce Trail related work, love being out in the woods, and being active. In the winter, they snowshoe, X-C ski, curl at Wiarton Curling Club and spend a lot of time blowing out their 400 m lane. (Can you believe

that they once shovelled the whole thing, when the snow-blower was broken?) In spring melts, Laura's passion is digging gullies to drain the driveway. (In fact, Laura can't really pass a puddle on the trail without trying to figure out if a few strokes with an errant stick could solve the wet-foot problem!)

Both of them had hiked the Bruce Trail before. Tom has completed the whole trail twice and was previously involved with the Toronto BTC as a Board member and Hike Leader. Laura has completed the BT once, and it is now "checked off". Other trails in the offing! Each spring they have been taking a hiking "holiday" on the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, for approximately 10 days and have completed about 20% of the trail thus far. According to Laura, Tom is getting older, and they have ascertained that at their current rate, he will be 99 years old when they finish.



By their description, their house is very small – only two bedrooms. But, it is sequestered in the woods, very peaceful, their little "slice of heaven". Initially, the Main Trail passed behind them and the bottom end of the Jack Poste trail passed in front. Unfortunately, the landowners in front decided to close the portion of trail that runs in front, citing garbage and dogs-off-leash. Tom and Laura never saw garbage on that trail, and indeed, pick up what they see on any trail. However, landowners have the right to revoke privileges for any reason. Tom and Laura feel hikers need to be aware that, often, the beloved Bruce Trail passes over private land through the goodwill of the landowners.

Anyone who knows them, see that Tom and Laura work as a team. Although each of them holds separate roles within the PBTC Executive, they constantly bounce ideas back and forth between them. Now, officially, Tom is the Trail Maintenance Coordinator and Laura is the Bruce Peninsula National Park/Peninsula Bruce Trail Club Liaison, but they share responsibilities and insights for both. Laura finds the history of the trail within the Park the most interesting part of her current Board work.

*(cont'd on page 16)*





## Seeking Donations for Devil's Monument Port-a-potty

The Club has concern for the land around the Devil's Monument due to the increasing number of visitors. It appears day visitors enjoy the ease of access and unique geological formations in this area. More people are visiting as families and it is apparent that some additional comfort facilities are required. After inquires it was apparent that funding was not available and we asked club members and the public to donate to allow to have a portable toilet service.

Public and volunteer support has made this service available and it is our hope funding for portable toilets will find its way into the budget of the various municipalities for next year.



Are you aware we have **Trail Angel** service this year?  
Contact Laura Browne if you are interested or have any questions. [lauraleebrowne@gmail.com](mailto:lauraleebrowne@gmail.com)  
<http://www.pbtc.ca/get-involved>



*Sydenham E2E hikers*







## More 50th Celebration



Above: Dignitaries being presented with the baton by local children

Above right: CEO Beth Gilhespy, Dr. Philip Gosling & President Walter Brewer



Right: Grant Ehrhardt at the display in the Community Centre also the recipient of the Porcupine Award 2017

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The official recognition of those involved in the refurbishment of the Snake Boardwalk including the RBC Blue Water Project, donour families and the Order of the Muddy Boot



### Order of the Muddy Boot

Back Row: Jim Woods ,Head behind him is Rich Coons, Tom Hall, RBC Rep “ Glenda Jamieson, Bud Guice, Walter Brewer, Darrell Schneider, Steve Jones, Pete Elliott, Henk Van Brakel, Brenda Langlois,  
Row two: Marie Woods, Deb Wong, Laura Browne, Alan Bobo



President Walter Brewer & Glenda Jamieson, RBC

## Reminiscences of the Bruce Trail by Ron Gatis

About 1955 when I was living in Toronto working at the CBC and my wife Sheila was working for Simpson's, an article in the Daily Star caught our attention. It showed a map of a proposed hiking trail that would go across my mother's property on the Bruce Peninsula both in Amabel and Albemarle Townships. I discussed this with my mother, Stella Whicher Gatis, who thought it was a nice idea. I knew no one involved in this venture but later, I'm not sure of the date, or why, but I attended a meeting in Edwards Gardens where they had maps showing the proposed hiking route through our family property.

Shortly after this in 1956 we both gave up our jobs in Toronto and moved to my home village of Colpoy's Bay, where we still live two hundred yards from the house where I was born.

To accurately remember what happened over 55 years ago is a bit of a stretch but I do remember a meeting in Wiarton with Phil Gosling and Ray Lowes and eventually speaking to land owners and getting permission to have the trail cross their property. I helped blaze the route and did some work on the trail between Wiarton and Hope Bay but nothing compared to the work of Duncan Armstrong's work from Wiarton to Cape Croker; or the Fowlers, who worked on the trail both north and south from Lion's Head.

I was the first President of the Lower Bruce Trail Club and wasn't one for holding local meetings so a lot of trail building and maintenance was done by groups from out of the area. Some of them would park behind our old general store then camp and work for the weekend. Many of the workers would buy their lunch in the store so my mother kept a booklet for them to sign. I hope I can find it some day.

I think the best part of my association with the Bruce Trail was to keep it on our property from its beginning to the present. It has had several reroutes but never been closed except for one day a year in the early years. There may be a few private land owners with more trail on their property but with the loop trails and the main trail there are over 10 kms on our property that the public has been able to use.

Before the official opening of the Bruce Trail in 1967, the executive decided to have a cairn built in Tobermory at the end of the trail and hired Ivan Lemcke to build it and local artist Ruth Arnsberger was to design it. Grif Ebel of Ebel Quarries donated the emblem insert. Ruth and I drove over to the Lake Huron shore where she picked out the stones. I loaded them onto my truck then later unloaded them at the spot where the cairn was to be built in Tobermory.

A few years ago at a Wiarton Rotary Club party at the Waterview Motel in talking to Ivan Lemcke, we got reminiscing about the trail and the cairn and the stones we had provided. Only then did I learn that most of the stones that Ruth and I had picked had been pitched over the bank into the water, probably by some kids, and Ivan had to go and pick more stones himself.

was when the Lower Bruce Trail Club hosted the Annual Meeting for the Bruce Trail Association. I recall some of the people involved in organizing it were Baptist Minister Rev. Dick Cross and his wife Mary, who were avid hikers and Bruce Trail workers; the owners of Wildwood Lodge and Evergreen Lodge who were friends of mine and were happy to provide accommodation and meeting facilities; Keith Solomon with his wife and friends looked after all the other details and I believe everyone thought it was a success.

A major highlight for me was when J.P. Johnstone asked me if I would be the transportation manager for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards hike from Tobermory to Owen Sound. This hike involved over twenty young people from all over the world, who had been chosen to receive a Duke of Edinburgh award. Jack and Shirley Johnstone did a tremendous job in looking after accommodations, feeding, entertaining and making sure about twenty-five people had a happy memorable ten days on the Bruce Trail. The Johnstones were a good example of if you want something done, ask the busiest person you know. They were in politics, farming, sawmilling, ran a motel, worked in Tobermory and were raising a family. Jack also found time to get a pilot's license and fly his own plane! He also did custom combining.

My job was to set up the campsites and help Ken McKay, who was the cook, and be ready to feed the hikers when they arrived each day. After breakfast the next morning the hikers would help load my truck then I would drive on to the next campsite. Usually we would be set up early in the afternoon and I would walk up the trail and come in with the hikers. After all these years Sheila and I still get an update at Christmas from an Australian couple who met on the hike and keep track of the other hike members.

About 1966 or 1967 Dr. Hauch from Owen Sound was President of the Bruce Trail Association and J.P. and I were on the executive. A couple of times Dr. Hauch rented a plane and pilot to fly us to the meetings. When René Brunelle was the Minister of Lands and Forests, he asked me to go along to look at the Peninsula from the air. We flew up along the escarpment and then back and forth across the two northern townships. From the air it looked to be mostly lakes and bush. It's good that much of this area is presently available for all of us to appreciate and hopefully not overuse.







(cont'd from page 14)

The Bruce Trail has had a great influence on my life. I was always into sports but not hiking until the Bruce Trail was thought of. About 1970 three fellows from Toronto whom I met because of the Bruce Trail, asked me if I would join them for a week's hike on the Presidential Range in New Hampshire. Short hikes with cabins to sleep in, led by members of the Appalachian Trail Club sounded like as walk in the park. After three days hiking I thought I was going to die. When we were crossing a highway, we met Ida Sainsbury, a seasoned hiker who had walked the length of both the Bruce and Appalachian Trails, I pleaded with her to drive me back to Pinkham Notch. She would have none of it! She said I was Canadian and I couldn't quit in front of these Americans. I did finish the hike and about ten years later I did the same hike with leader Willard Kinzie and had a great time since by then I was a more seasoned hiker thanks to the Bruce Trail. My best hike with Willard was to the bottom of the Grand Canyon with my son Peter.

I'm not sure how I met Ron Baylis but his Comfortable Hiking Holidays took me on hiking trips I would never have done on my own. With him I was on trips from the Canadian Rockies to Slovenia in Europe and a dozen places in between. My long hiking trips ended when he retired. I will always be grateful having had Ron Baylis and his wife Eleanor as friends and hope they are still hiking.

Ron also led weekend trips on the Bruce Trail and other Ontario trails. On the Peninsula section he would stay at Evergreen Lodge and I would usually have a meal or two with the group and hike on the Saturday with many of his friends. He also led hikes at Tobermory staying at a local lodge.

Another hike leader is Greg Vincent who brings hikers to this area and uses Wildwood Lodge for a base. My wife and I usually enjoy a meal with the group and on their final hike of the weekend, usually Monday of the May holiday weekend, they eat their bagged lunch by the creek in our backyard at Colpoy's Bay with tea and lemonade provided.

It is now a tradition and we have made many friends over the years.

One of my most memorable hikes on the Bruce Trail was along the shore and on top of the cliff from Cabot Head to High Dump. When my two friends and I arrived at Cabot Head there were dozens of policemen and Lands and Forests personnel as well as a helicopter and a police boat. They weren't going to let us hike and then someone recognized me and said we could help them. The situation was that the previous day a group of disadvantaged people had been on an outing and when they were ready to head home, one of them was missing. This was the next morning and there was a major search in progress.

It was a gray day and slippery underfoot and the lady hiking with us twisted her ankle and couldn't continue. Somehow we got the attention of the police boat and it met us at High Dump then took us to Cabot Head. Later on that day, the lost chap walked out of the bush about three or four hundred yards from where he had last been seen.

For over fifty years an 'idea' for a trail has become an institution. For its entire length it has become a major tourist attraction and almost every municipality it touches mentions it in their advertising. I'm not sure about this but I don't think any of them give the Bruce Trail much financial support. Thankfully thousands of broader-minded organizations and individuals have kept the Trail intact and financially sound. In recent years the leadership of CEO Beth Gilhespy has been an inspiration to all of us.

If Phil Gosling is correct in his booklet about the beginnings of the Trail then the first guide book was published in 1965 and I still have a copy. To illustrate how the 'idea' has grown and flourished, the first 19 pages would be of interest for all to read if it were reprinted. Those pages give an introduction to the Trail and how to use it, the formation of about ten clubs and a short description of each of them. The fee structure is on page 11. Talk about inflation! Pages 15 to 17 cover how to use the guide book and page 19 is information about the publication of the Bruce Trail Guide Book, which was copyrighted in July 1965.



Hikers 2010

(cont'd from page 9)

As Trail Maintenance Co-ordinator, Tom is responsible for over 80 Trail Captains who look after the upkeep and maintenance of the trail; ensures that Trail Maintenance Reports are submitted twice a year; reports chainsaw needs to Steve Jones; and deals with other maintenance issues such as boardwalks and bridges - recently, replacing all structure numbers. Additionally, they recently began sharing the role of Acting Volunteer and Membership Coordinators.

Tom and Laura have been providing information for those seeking camping advice, or "how to break down the Peninsula section" into manageable hikes. Together, they also started a Trail Angel program for the PBTC last year and Laura is the point person. Trail Angels refers to anything to make a hiker's trek better - mainly car shuttles. ("Trail Magic" they inform me is another concept, for example you are walking along the trail and encounter a cooler with cold beverages - sodas, beer, etc.) When they were doing their end-to-end years ago they sent a message to the PBTC club asking for a shuttle and were fortunate to have Don McIlraith respond as a trail angel at a time when the concept was not yet in use. They considered themselves lucky...the Peninsula section was very difficult to hike - terrain, accommodations, and transportation. On Laura's fiftieth birthday, Don shuttled them down to Barrow Bay, they endured camping at Reed's Dump, her glasses broke, Tom lost her hat, it continued to rain, Laura lost her newly-

bought Ice-Breaker sweater, but they survived and came back to finish! They have been very busy with the Trail Angel program, and even though it is only advertised on the pbtc.ca site, there are many requests.

Their first volunteer roles with PBTC were as Trail Captains at Sydney Bluff, taking over from Beth Gilhespy. As more people wanted to take on sections, they gave up their particular section and now only report on sections in which Trail Captains have been unable to, or have not fulfilled their duties. Lloyd Hayward, with his initial orientation walk-through of their first TC section, advising them of what they needed to do, was very influential and he continues to be a positive influence on BT trail maintenance volunteers. They also note that Grant Ehrhardt, this year's winner of the "Porcupine Award", personifies 'volunteerism'.

Without a doubt, Rich Moccia, Trail Sawyer Extraordinaire, has been an educational fountain of chainsaw knowledge for Tom and Laura. They say every prospective sawyer on the Peninsula should spend a couple of days sawing with him! After that, they should take the course, but Rich explains the most important rule is, "Look up, look up, look up again." When they hike and chainsaw with Rich, their motto is, "Hike fast, cut slow". Although Tom and Laura are both BTC Chainsaw Certified and are eligible to cut, unless it is an "easy" cut, they defer to Rich. They became known as the "Three-Must-Have-Beers" (as in the Three Musketeers) and have done much to eliminate trail blockages and tree overhangs. (cont'd on pg 17)



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(cont'd from page 16)

They are committed to making the trail a safe place to hike. Trees down are easily dealt with, but leaners and technical falls are Rich's forte. Sandra Moccia, as "Zorro", cracks the whip to keep them in line! Most importantly, they have an algorithm to calculate how many beers they can consume after a hot, sweaty day cutting trees in the forest.



Tom and Laura also led the recent BTC 50th Anniversary Baton E2E hikes with Tom doing the organizing. They realized that they would have to deliver and collect the baton each day, so they might as well collect the special PBTC 50th Anniversary E2E badge. They also used it as an opportunity to inspect the trail prior to the subsequent events such as the 50km Challenge. The Baton hike took 13 days, with different people joining in each day, and on some days they did two hikes. If you followed Laura's daily Facebook postings throughout the hike, you saw how much fun everyone was having.

The Snake Boardwalk replacement on the Cape Croker Reserve has been the highlight of the many projects Tom and Laura have been involved with, due in great part to the "Order of the Muddy Boot"...a group of many volunteers, ready to get into the mud and poison ivy!! Truly, hardy souls! The boardwalk itself is over 900m long, the longest single boardwalk on the Bruce Trail. It was originally built between 1997-9 by the members of the Chippewas of Nawash Band and was funded by four BTC clubs. The boardwalk had deteriorated, become slippery and slanted so the Peninsula Club elected

to replace it. A core team lead by the Trail Captain, Alan Bobo and directed by Zane Davies, owner of Treadscape, met weekly through 2014 and completed over 1,300 feet of restoration. The team re-formed in 2015 and again in 2016, led by Tom as foreman. Funding from RBC Blue Water Foundation and the estate of two families close to the project enabled it to be completed. The official opening of the boardwalk and the unveiling of the signage commemorating all the donors recently took place.

Tom and Laura describe themselves as detail-oriented. They are critical thinkers and strive to make existing processes better. They both love to work outdoors, and love "hiking with a purpose", whether it be chain-sawing, blazing, decommissioning a boardwalk, re-building a boardwalk, or re-routing a trail. As retirees, they are now doing the things that they WANT to do, rather than the things that they HAVE to do. Their aim is to improve the hiking experience for people who want to "do" the Peninsula – seeing a need and responding to it. They are unable to name a favourite section of the trail on the Peninsula, as they love its ruggedness, it's remoteness and it's many beautiful views. They both believe that they live in the best place on the planet. What would they say to someone who was thinking about volunteering for the PBTC? "Ask yourself: What can I contribute? What are my skills?" The rewards are many: meeting new people, learning new skills, and having fun in the outdoors. It's about giving back and ensuring the future.

by Brenda Langlois

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Back row: John Dowding, Cathy Baier (hidden), Bruce Castle, Eleanor Cash, Nancy Ince, Barry Ince, Darrell Schneider, George Phlak

Front row: Lynda Beckett, Elaine Powney, Susanne Smith, Cheryl Armstrong, Hanne Fynbo, Susan Allen

## Cover Photo - Story of the Dryad Saddle

In Greek mythology, a dryad is a tree spirit - the dryad saddles (these fungus) only appear on dead trees or stumps and are thought of as the vehicle that carries the spirit to a new home. Seldom are they seen in multiples as in this photo.

*from wikipedia: The name "dryad's saddle" refers to creatures in Greek mythology called dryads who could conceivably fit and ride on this mushroom. A dryad (/ˈdraʊ.æd/; Greek: Δρυάδες, sing.: Δρυάς) is a tree nymph, or tree spirit, in Greek mythology. In Greek drys signifies "oak". Thus, dryads are specifically the nymphs of oak trees, though the term has come to be used for all tree nymphs in general*



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Tip from Kathie – Book your hiking agenda early for your lodgings to avoid disappointment



## REMEMBERING Doug Robertson

On Friday, August 4, 2017, Doug Robertson died after a lengthy illness. It had been a quarter century since he had been the Bruce Trail's Executive Director but to veterans of that time he is remembered for the key role he played. Doug became the Executive Director in the early 1980s when the BTA was at its lowest ebb. Landowner lobby groups had prompted an irate public opposition to the initial proposals regarding Niagara Escarpment Commission controls and a number of handshake agreements were quickly withdrawn. In one weekend the entire Trail of the Blue Mountains Club was closed. In the north Bruce Peninsula the former Trail at Cabot Head and between Loon Lake and Cooney's Dump was shut down. The Trail was no longer continuous.

Remember that at this time the three northern clubs were essentially dormant. With Doug's leadership from head office, during the decade of the 1980s not only did the Peninsula Trail survive but the club also began to grow in strength.

Early in the decade, the three initial clubs were amalgamated into one. Still without a local volunteer base it was necessary for four southern clubs to take on management responsibilities for a part of the Trail.

Doug also worked on reestablishing a continuous Trail. In the Cabot Head area he arranged with the MNR for the route to High Dump which still exists today, some 35 years later. Not only did Doug handle the approval process, he also flagged the route himself so that a weekend work party of volunteers from the south could cut open the Trail. Doug also worked on achieving more of the Optimum Route. In 1985 he and Gord Cottrill of the MNR located the Trail around Gun Point in the Lion's Head area. Then volunteer teams from the south quickly built this magnificent loop.

In this decade, the dream of securing key lands accelerated as a result of the Bruce Trail Project led by Alan Ernest who worked under Doug. Of the many acquisitions the two most prominent were the Devil's Monument and White Bluff.

Doug also played a key role in the establishment of the National Park. In 1988 there was the threat of the private sale of Bruce County Forest lands near Halfway Dump (instead of a sale to Parks Canada). Doug orchestrated a letter-writing campaign to Ottawa, urging the federal government to make a reasonable offer to Bruce County. Within two weeks, 800 letters landed on government desks, thereby stimulating the reconsideration of their initial position. If this large property had been lost to the Park, the possibility is strong that the federal government would not have proceeded with the creation of the park because the land base would have been too small.

After a decade of these contributions Doug moved on to a job as an environmental planner. I think that he was concerned about "burn-out" as the Executive Director, but it was a real loss to the BTA. It took more than a decade to regain the type of leadership that the organization needed. A letter received from Doug's son Steve to the BTC told of Doug's final days. He stated: "One of his greatest loves and passions was the BTA, and I wanted to let you know that over the past two weeks of being with him daily at the hospital he continued to talk about his time with the Bruce Trail with great fondness."

Steve concluded: "Please keep up the great work and continue to preserve the environment and wonderful trail system that he was honoured to help build." The Bruce Trail was indeed honoured to have such a person as its Executive Director.

*Ross McLean*

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