



Trail Mail

A periodic e-newsletter of Hike Ontario

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Hike Ontario Welcomes New President

A warm welcome and congratulations to our new President, Todd Bardes. As of April 1st, 2004, Todd will be succeeding David Francis as the president of the Hike Ontario board of directors.

Todd has welcomed the challenge and responsibilities of his new role by saying *"It is important for us to learn from the past, to have a vision for the future, but to keep our hiking boot in the present. Hike Ontario has the ability to make a difference to the future of Ontario and have a major impact to the health, recreation and environment enjoyment of millions of Ontario residents."*

Todd, you are a wonderful addition to Hike Ontario. We look forward to a new fresh approach and vision as you take Hike Ontario forward to its next thirty years of flying the flag for hikers throughout Ontario.

We are also pleased to announce that the strength, skills and tireless efforts of David Francis will now be focused on the work of the Certification and Awards Committee whose activities and responsibilities are expanding by the month.

We wish you both warm wishes and the best of luck in your future endeavours.

Notice to HO Trail Clubs: Insurance Update

We are very pleased to announce that our search for new liability insurance has been successful.

Coverage has been secured through Intercity Insurance Services (Aurora, ON) and their Outdoor Recreation (OREC) Program. Coverage is \$5,000,000 and will begin as our present insurance expires on March 31st.

A copy of the insurance certificate will be sent to you as soon as possible. At the same time we will be enclosing an invoice for your coverage.

Hike Ontario has been able to keep the increase to the clubs to 50% over last year's rates.

Should you have any questions, please contact Harold Sellers, Hike Ontario Insurance Coordinator at hikerharold@rogers.com

Call for Volunteers

We are presently in the process of establishing a Constitution and By-laws Review Committee. If you are interested in participating please contact us at info@hikeontario.com

OUR MISSION

To provide support, education and representation while promoting hiking and walking in Ontario.

Hike Ontario is a member of the National Trail Association and the Ontario Trails Council.

Feature Article: Hikers Meet Bikers Off the Trail

By Bill Wilson, Humber Valley Trail Association

It is not often in the Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association's 10-year history that its executive has had five guests show up at its meetings as they did September 10th. But this was not a big surprise since this was the first time HVHTA had met since announcing that the Humber Trail was restricted to hikers only.

The five guests were from the Bolton Mountain Bike Club (BMBC). A reasonably civilized hour-long discussion took place. The ice was somewhat thawed when one of the bikers, Christine Wallace, asked the HVHTA executive if it was going to ban dogs from the trail as well. Trail Maintenance Director, John Doughty, quickly asked if she meant dogs on bikes.

This was not the first time bikers had visited HVHTA's executive. Last October two BMBC members came to express concern for damage done by bikers in a sensitive Hemlock grove. They also stated a desire to somehow organize with HVHTA for trail maintenance.

At that time, HVHTA explained that it not only held a license with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (because TRCA owned all the trail lands) to build and maintain a hiking trail, but that the license explicitly stated that "HVHTA shall have the right to exclude all non-hiking uses on the trail". It was also explained that HVHTA raises its own money for trail building through donations, successful grant applications and membership fees. HVHTA does not depend on taxpayers' money from the Town of Caledon.

Nevertheless, at that time, most HVHTA executive members accepted that some kind of alliance with bikers was better than attempting to ban bikers or ignoring them. HVHTA decided to refer this to its Annual General Meeting in April 2003 for discussion. It was also agreed that a loose association with the BMBC could take place whereby BMBC members would be welcome to attend monthly HVHTA meetings and take part in HVHTA work parties.

After that, for the next six months, HVHTA heard nothing from the bikers. But during that time, the seriousness of three issues became much clearer. First was the ongoing damage to the trail from bikers flanking steps and taking detours off-trail. Second was the growing dissatisfaction about the safety and distraction of fast moving bikers in the narrow, winding pathway in wilderness areas as expressed by HVHTA members at its annual general meeting. Third was the matter of legal liability, which potentially could escalate already high insurance premiums for HVHTA.

The legitimacy of these concerns were all supported in a recent policy paper by the Bruce Trail Association. As a result of their research, this year, the BTA restricted its trail to pedestrian use only.

By this time as well, was the HVHTA feeling that, if mountain bikers really needed more trails besides those of Albion Hills, the Trans Canada Trail and downtown Bolton, then the bikers could begin to work as HVHTA does in making their trail a reality for hikers. On June 11/03, therefore, the HVHTA executive decided, subject to a final decision at its 2004 AGM, that the Trail shall be restricted to pedestrian use only to reduce trail impact and ensure an excellent carefree hiking experience. As HVHTA President Dan O'Reilly, who incidentally is a biker as well, said, HVHTA's decision was not an easy one.

Dan O'Reilly and I founded the HVHTA ten years ago for hikers. We take great pride with the rest of the executive in what we have achieved for hikers and in bringing more people closer to a personal and quiet experience with nature. HVHTA strongly feels that this is as much an issue of allowing hikers continued enjoyment of the inherent natural

qualities of the Humber Valley rather than just a money or management issue.

This is a matter of HVHTA's nature stewardship role. By its constitution for its Provincial Letters Patent as a not-for-profit organization, HVHTA has a mission to not only build and maintain a hiking trail but "To promote the appreciation, renewal, and protection of the natural environment around the trail and to encourage ecologically responsible attitudes towards it". Given the HVHTA member growing dissatisfaction with the distraction of bikers, this appreciation of the natural environment is being compromised.

If Dan and I and the rest of the HVHTA executive feel remiss in any way, it is perhaps that we did not make our position clear much sooner. On the other side, the bikers clearly feel excluded. That is an ugly feeling in anyone's mind.

It was agreed that we could meet again in the company of the major landowner involved. The TRCA, after all, owns thousands of acres in Caledon. Surely there is room for more kinds of trails. Another meeting should also include an arbitrator - someone who can chair and steer the group to a more complete solution which can meet both hiker and biker needs.

Feature Hikes: Easter Weekend Hikes

Saturday, April 10, 2004

Thames Valley Trail Association

London's Lofty Lookout #8. Loop hike in Oakridge area includes an overlooked overlook we last looked over in 1994. 1:00 p.m. approx. 2 hrs. Leaders David & Kate Kirkpatrick (519) 641-7911

Sunday, April 11, 2004

Rideau Trail Association, Kingston Club

Gould Lake Conservation Area. Take a leisurely hike along the Wagon trail with Jean. Level 2. Distance 10 km. Depart 9:00 a.m. Leader: Jean Thompson (613) 544-0340

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association, Barrie Club

Hike North Simcoe Rail Trail. Hendried Rd. to Fort Willow and back. Approx. 4 hrs. Leaving rear of Canadian Tire Store, Bayfield St. at 10:00 a.m. Contact Gerald Moran (705) 726-2071

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association, Peterborough Club

Hike on the Hog's Back. 12-14 kms depending on trail conditions. Meet on lower parking lot behind LCBO and Post Office in Omeme. (Turn south at traffic lights) Car shuttle to trail. Contact Thea at (705) 742-4009 or email jenkina@hexicom.net

Oak Ridges Trail Association

President's Walk with ORTA President Harold Sellers. Whitchurch Conservation Area and Robinson Tract (Map 4). 4-5 km, 1.5 hr loop hike, easy. Meet in parking lot of Whitchurch CA, south side of Aurora Rd between Kennedy and Warden. Harold 905-853-3518.

Monday, April 12, 2004

Guelph Hiking Club

Scenic Drive and Chedoke Trail. Meet for a loop hike at 1:30 p.m. in parking lot where the Chedoke Rail Trail meets Scenic Drive, underneath the Hydro Towers (Map 7, km 40.9 Bruce Trail Guide). Cancelled if pouring rain. Leader: Paul Toffoletti (905) 318-4237 or email pault@kwic.co

Tip of the Month: Day Hiking Tips

- Carry your clothing and food in different colored stuff sacks to keep your pack organized so you can easily find what you need.
- Always carry plenty of water. Three quarts per person per day is a good rule of thumb. Warmer conditions and/or rugged terrain may necessitate carrying more. Take drinks often to stay well hydrated. Filter or treat water from natural sources.
- Fill your canteens before you leave home. It is better to be prepared than to rely on backcountry water sources.
- Carry more food than you think you will need. It is better to bring extra snacks home with you than to go hungry.
- Practice minimum impact hiking. Carry out whatever you pack in so others can enjoy the surroundings. If you can, help pick up what previous visitors may have left behind.
- When you choose a hike, consider the ability levels of all members of your party.
- Hike only as fast as the slowest member of your group.
- Acquaint yourself with the area and specific trails you plan to hike so you can set a reasonable timetable for your hike. Many guidebooks include estimated times of trips.
- Start off slowly to avoid excess fatigue part way through your hike.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good running order and your gas tank is full.
- Check weather conditions before you leave.
- Leave your itinerary with someone you trust and check in upon your return.

Hungry Hikers

Why not take the kids out for a refreshing Spring Hike? Just make sure you feed them well!

Kids' Favourite Trail Mix

- 4 cups Chex cereal
- 1/2 cup Dried fruit bits
- 1/2 cup Raisins
- 1/2 cup peanuts
- 1/2 cup M & Ms

Put into a large Ziploc bag and shake to mix.



HO Executive Committee

Todd Bardes,
President

David Francis,
Past President

Terri Hamilton,
Vice President

Wendy Hoernig,
Secretary

Stephen Kamnitzer,
Treasurer

Contact Hike Ontario

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info@hikeontario.com

Board of Directors Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is being held on **Saturday, April 17th, 2004** at 10:00 a.m. at the CPR Station Trail Centre in Goderich, Ontario (on the shores of Lake Huron - the "West Coast" of Ontario)

This is a lovely part of the province, and since you will have traveled a fair distance to get here, we would like you to get 'full value' for your long trek. Why not make it into a weekend getaway? Give yourself some extra time to get to know this part of the province a little better.

For those who enjoy camping, the Falls Reserve Conservation Area (in Benmiller, just outside of Goderich) is opening for the summer on Friday April 16th. There will be camping sites with hydro and water hook-ups available, as well as washrooms with showers.

For those who prefer a roof over their heads, there are several local residents willing to billet directors or directors and their husband/wife/partner. Speak up soon, if you want to stay at one of these.

If a B & B is more your style, go to www.town.goderich.on.ca and click on Tourist Information. Then, under Accommodation, click on Huron's West Coast and you'll find everything you need to know - descriptions, prices etc. There are places just outside of town that offer peaceful, county settings as well as places in town, handy to everything. There is also detailed restaurant information in the same web-site location.

If you are interested in finding something interesting to do in the area Saturday evening, there is one interesting, out of the ordinary choice: a fund-raiser for the Art Gallery of the newly enlarged, and renovated Goderich Public Library. It is called "April In Paris, An Evening of Jazz, Wine and Art."

"April in Paris" is going to be cabaret style, with the musicians performing in the centre of the room, surrounded by small tables (seating 4 - 6) and there will be art on the walls. Rumor has it there may also be some actors adding a bit of atmosphere by playing roles evocative of the artistic characters who frequent(ed) bars along the Seine in Paris. Wine, cheese, pâtés, and other finger foods - both savory and sweet, will be served during the evening. The price is \$25 per person. If you are interested in attending, we recommend you phone to reserve tickets soon at either the Reuben Sallows Gallery, (519) 524-9261 or Mac Campbell's photography (519) 524-7532 or after hours, (519) 524-7935.

A full agenda for the business meeting will be forwarded to your club representatives in the near future.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting and/or Goderich, please contact Hike Ontario's secretary Wendy Hoernig at info@hikeontario.com