

# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF TREADWAY 1989-2009

BRUCE TRAIL

# TREADWAY

HONOUR ROLL

UPDATES  
EVENTS  
IDEAS  
NEWS

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**Laurence Christie's** involvement with the Bruce Trail goes back more than 30 years. He had become a member of the Caledon Hills Club in 1978 and soon joined a work party to build a bridge on what is now the Peter Beecham Side Trail in the Hockley Valley. "I didn't even know where I was", he recounts, but he loved the area so much that he became the trail captain and remains in that role today.

For his volunteer involvement Laurence has received a number of accolades: as Caledon Hills Trail Director in the mid 90's, he twice earned the Tom East Award (for the best reroutes of the year) and he won the Susan Oleskevich Award which honours the BTC's "unsung volunteer." Just this year he received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award from the government of Ontario.

But his contributions are not limited to Caledon. When called upon, he gladly helps other clubs with major projects. Examples are both Beaver Valley's Falling Water Trail and Sydenham's Bayview Extension where he led work crews. Just this fall he assisted with the new Walker's Woods portion of the Dufferin section.

His favourite area of the Trail is the Hockley Valley. In the 1980's and continuing to this day, he has worked in this area,

especially to "solve some critical environmental problems. Some of the reroutes [which he organized] were done to repair the scars that overuse...and the erosion of water had done on a very sensitive land." As he says, "you can correct those things"; as a result of this work, he played a major role in awakening in Caledon trail workers an environmental consciousness, a realization that any trail must "walk lightly on the land." For this reason he strongly supported the name change to a "Conservancy"; it is "reflected in how we build trails, how we do our work."

In 2009 Laurence started the *Trail Blazers* in Caledon, a mid-week work group that meets regularly to tackle those "little tasks" which are needed to improve the physical condition of the Trail. There is now a core of regular attendees. Interest is growing but more volunteers are always welcome.

What characterizes work parties which Laurence leads is his degree of organization. A past president of Caledon, Dave Platt, wrote of the many hours that Laurence contributes, "checking out problem areas, looking at necessary reroutes, planning work parties, flagging areas of work detail, competitively pricing and ordering required materials, hauling this material on his trailer...and quite often carrying in the material to the actual site on his own, ready for a work party."

Laurence fondly remembers volunteers such as Chris Walker, Barry Westhouse and Dave Turrell. From their encouragement and skills he was motivated to continue the work. He wants to see the volunteer spirit and this involvement continue, and his personal goal is "to pass it on." He has written: "I can think of no better resolution that is more rewarding than to become a volunteer....The act of volunteering is an essential function in a Bruce Trail Club. The quality of the trail we enjoy and have come to expect...is entirely due to the hard work of volunteers..."

"So I challenge you", Laurence writes, "to become a volunteer and therefore experience that feeling of satisfaction in maintaining a safe and enjoyable trail." It is a challenge that I hope more and more of our members will pick up.

**Ross McLean**



**Jack Morgan** Ever since the Bruce Trail was founded, the dream had been to extend the footpath into the Upper Beaver Valley. Twice efforts were made to gain the necessary agreements but each failed. Then in the past few years a concerted effort under the direction of Jack Morgan was successful. Although a team effort, the credit must go primarily to Jack for all his talents in bringing about this achievement.

In 1970 Jack and his wife had moved to Meaford. A career in education left little time to become active with the Bruce Trail but he promised that when he retired he would become involved. Bruce Calvert has to be given credit; he remembered Jack's promise and shortly after he retired, the call was made and Jack became an active member of the Beaver Valley team.

In 1999 Jack was the Beaver Valley BTA rep and also the BTA vice-president. During that tenure he worked on the Strategic Plan and helped to put together the Land Securement concept, then marketed as the "Realize The Dream" program. The goal was a secured Trail by 2015.

After a stint as Beaver Valley club president, Jack assumed the role of Land Securement and Trail Development Director. No other club has such an executive position, but under Jack's leadership it led to a remarkable number of property acquisitions and trail reroutes. With the ongoing dream of what was then called "The Upper Beaver Valley Extension", as Jack said, "it made sense to create the position."

The first step was to contact landowners. Although there were some additional land acquisitions along

the proposed route, the real success was in obtaining handshake agreements. In a day when only a minority of clubs continue to pursue new agreements, Jack was able to achieve a remarkable 15 new handshakes. This success was a testimonial to the credibility which the Club had built within its community and especially to Jack's remarkable people skills: he's "a tough man to say no to!"

Next came the physical work of building the Trail. Robert Avery has written that as you walk the route, "you get a sense of all the work that went into developing the trail." Jack tells the stories of those work parties: "Having acquired the access to the optimum route, the real work began.... Hundreds of volunteers picked up chainsaws, branch loppers and shovels and headed out into the woods to create a trail." Again it was Jack's organizational skills that put these teams together.

At the 2009 BTC AGM, Jack accepted on behalf of the Beaver Valley BTC the Tom East Award for the year's most significant contribution to the achievement of the optimum route. At 31 km in length, it was a major addition. Roberta Avery proclaims, "What an extraordinary gift the members of the Beaver Valley chapter of the Bruce Trail Conservancy have given outdoor enthusiasts like myself by building this trail."

The Beaver Valley Club is one that I have always admired. It has tremendous support within its community; founder Keith Solomon is still fondly remembered. People such as Bruce Calvert have done so much to strengthen that bond. Their *esprit de corps* is contagious and their volunteer support exemplary. But it is the leadership of people like Jack which is so essential to this success.

Jack's plans for the Club have not finished. Although the funds for more acquisitions are now somewhat limited, he continues to look at options and is already thinking of possible side trails in 2010.

But it is the achievement of the Falling Water Trail for which Jack will be most remembered. As Roberta Avery says, "Thanks to the efforts of local volunteers who have made access to this wonderful trail possible ....All that hard work and years of planning and scheming have resulted in what must be one of the best hikes in Ontario" **Ross McLean**