

A PUBLICATION FOR TRAIL WORKERS

BRUCE TRAIL

TREADWAY

HONOUR ROLL

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“What magnificent role models the two of them have been for all of us who strive for a quality trail!”

CLAYTON AND ANNE ROBERTS

This spring, after 18 years of dedicated service to the quality of our trail in the Bruce Peninsula, Clayton and Anne Roberts felt that it was time to pass on their duties as trail captains. Ever since the rebirth of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club in 1993, they have been an inspiration to all of us.

In the 1960's Clayton and Anne purchased their property at the southern end of the Dyer's Bay cottage community. Even today they catch the first sailing of the Chi-cheemaun to return to the Bruce, leaving only again in October on the last sailing. In the 1970's they first joined the Bruce Trail, but by the end of that decade, the local club was essentially dormant.

I still remember my first contact with them. In 1993, the Peninsula Club was being reconstituted, and the first edition of *The Rattler* contained a plea for trail captains. Clayton and Anne at that time were spending their winters in London, England, where Clayton was continuing his research at the British Museum. By the time, their letter got back to me, all I had left to offer them was the assistant trail captain's role on the stretch from Halfway Dump to High Dump. Little did I know at that time what an asset they would be to the club!

Clayton has spent his career as a history professor at Ohio State University in Columbus. But Dyer's Bay was their “piece of paradise”, and as active outdoors people, they had come to know the Bruce Trail well.

After that initial contact in 1993, their involvement simply intensified. They liked nothing better than building new trail, and the Dyer's Bay area gave them plenty of opportunity. Each summer's day, Clayton would work on his latest book until noon, and then the two of them would venture out to work on the trail. They were almost single-handedly responsible for building the Dyer's Bay Side Trail, now part of the main Trail, and they repeated that role with the Juniper Flats Side Trail. Just last year they alone effected a trail change on the Michiganders' property which the BTC had acquired.

Anne was especially insistent on "swamping" her trail, removing all the cuttings so that the evidence of "making" the trail had disappeared. I remember my first visit to the Juniper Flats area after it had been opened, and it was as if one were walking through a park setting. There was no evidence of a trail having been "cut out" of the bush; instead, the pathway wound naturally through the terrain.

A decade ago, Clayton and Anne were the first recipients of the Peninsula Club's Porcupine Award for their volunteer work and commitment to trail quality. (The award, now renamed after John and Judy Appleton, rewards those with the tenacity of a porcupine!)

That same year, Clayton and Anne won the B.T.A.'s Susan Oleskevich Award, presented annually to the person who best exemplifies the concept of volunteerism in trail maintenance and development work. Eric Best when presenting the award described them as "Americans who return to the Bruce every six months to work on the Trail." Indeed, they were the first Americans to win this award, the first couple to do so, and Anne was the first woman to be chosen.

Their nomination had been supported by veteran Peninsula trail workers. John Appleton

wrote: "They do it all, flagging, cutting, trimming, tread work and blazing....They are relentless. Daily they work on a project until it is completed....They are intensely proud of their ability to create a new trail for the future enjoyment of generations to come....Anne and Clayton Roberts are true Bruce Trail unsung heroes."

Former PBTC president and Trail Director Jim Wadleigh wrote: "To watch Anne and Clayton interact as they work on the Trail is to understand teamwork and partnership. Creating a safe, enjoyable trail by hacking through the jungles of the Escarpment is part science but mostly art. Anne and Clayton have an excellent sense of what needs to be done, how it is best done efficiently, and how to work together so that no detail is forgotten. ...True teamwork...[As well], Anne and Clayton participate actively in the life of the Dyer's Bay community, leading hikers, cleaning up garbage that the bears have scattered, advocating and living environmental awareness, providing a vivid example that age matters little in positive living, and exemplifying 'Service Above Self'."

In the summer, 2002 club newsletter, Anne wrote of "The Art and Science of Trail Building", stating that "trail building is my favourite thing to do." After explaining the various tasks involved in this work, she concluded: "To plan, build and complete a new part of the Bruce Trail is a wonderful satisfaction. I love to think of the generations who will use and enjoy what we created. I can see joy for me as long as I live."

What magnificent role models the two of them have been for all of us who strive for a quality trail! Although they will no longer be responsible for their own section, their example will be remembered with affection, and we hope to see them annually at Dyer's Bay for many more years.

Ross McLean