

# The Iroquoian

Official newsletter of the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club

Fall 2021



## We have resumed our scheduled weekly hikes.

Check out our hike calendar at:

[http://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd\\_calendar/iroquoia/](http://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd_calendar/iroquoia/)

We hope you experience the wonders of nature this hiking season has to offer.

**Event Note End to End :** The Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club made the difficult choice to cancel the 2021 End to End, due to the logistics and risk of running this particular event during a continued pandemic.

**Newsletter Note:** Due to issues beyond our control as a volunteer organization, this issue of the Iroquoian looks very different than usual. All the submitted articles have been included. We will be back with our normal look for the Winter edition. Thank you ahead of time for your understanding.

“Preserving a ribbon of wilderness for everyone, forever”

# Presidents Fall Report

Fall is approaching and we are at peak hiking time. Of course, this is being written in the middle of July and I am presuming that that we have 100% vaccination from COVID by September. Please remember that the vaccine is NOT A CURE, but is to help the immune system fight COVID-19 or any variant if you were to get it. YES, you can still get it and be very sick, just not sick enough for a hospital visit (hopefully).



With this in mind, our Board and volunteers who organize events have been struggling to try and decide if certain traditional events will continue for a second year or not. It is so difficult to try to determine what the rules will be in the fall and if we start to go into a fourth wave. Another factor is that a number of members and volunteers, including myself, are unsure of what kind of exposure we are willing to risk. A number of events such as the Annual End to End are very dependant on having the right number of volunteers. For example, any hiking I have been doing is in more “remote” sections of the trail that are not too busy and not at peak times. I hope to feel comfortable enough to get back into leading hikes for the Club again.

We have discussed the situation with the musicians, and sadly, have decided to cancel the Concert Fundraiser for this year.

The Steeltown Stomp has been approval by the BTC and City of Hamilton which will allow the Steeltown Stomp to proceed this year on September 25th with reduced number of 100 participants, and is now Sold Out.

The Annual End to End has, regrettably, been cancelled this year due to the logistics and risk of putting on this event.

Bruce Trail Day in the first Sunday of October will once again be a virtual event, perhaps spread out over a number of days or weeks. The BTC annual Meeting will take place as a virtual event in October. We are holding out hope for the big New Year’s Day public hikes. Please check our website for more information on the status of these events.

I want to thank our long time volunteer and Land Steward Director Gary Beaudoin for all his years of service to the BTC and the Club. Gary recently decided to step down from the Board. As a Land Steward myself, Gary made sure I had everything I needed and came out to walk my property with me. He was always quick to get back to me if I had an issue or question. He will continue to be a strong supporter and I look forward to seeing him again at a future event. Fortunately, our secretary / archivist/ BTC Board representative, Cynthia Archer, was very interested in taking over the role. Cynthia's background in biology is very fitting and certainly explains her interest. Thank you for filling the role, Cynthia!

We are now half way on a pilot project with the Head Office called the Trail Ambassador program. This is a summer jobs program with funding from the federal government. Sydenham, Peninsula and Iroquoia and two other Clubs were chosen as the pilot project locations. We have two women walking the Trail, picking garbage, doing trail audit, talking with people on the trail about trail etiquette and to answer questions, species inventory and a number of other items. They have been sending in weekly reports to the head office and to our Club on what they have been doing and making special notes. It has shocked me to read about the number of mountain bikes, people off trail and loose dogs that they have encountered. I expected to hear about garbage issues, especially near hot spots, but this is something else. But the upside is that they have had many enjoyable encounters with people who want to know about the Bruce Trail. A year end report will be completed in August. Thank you Nicole and Kate.

You will notice that we printed a press release from the Hamilton Environmentalist of the Year Committee (which we sit on) for the Lifetime Achievement Award being handed to Thomas A. Beckett.

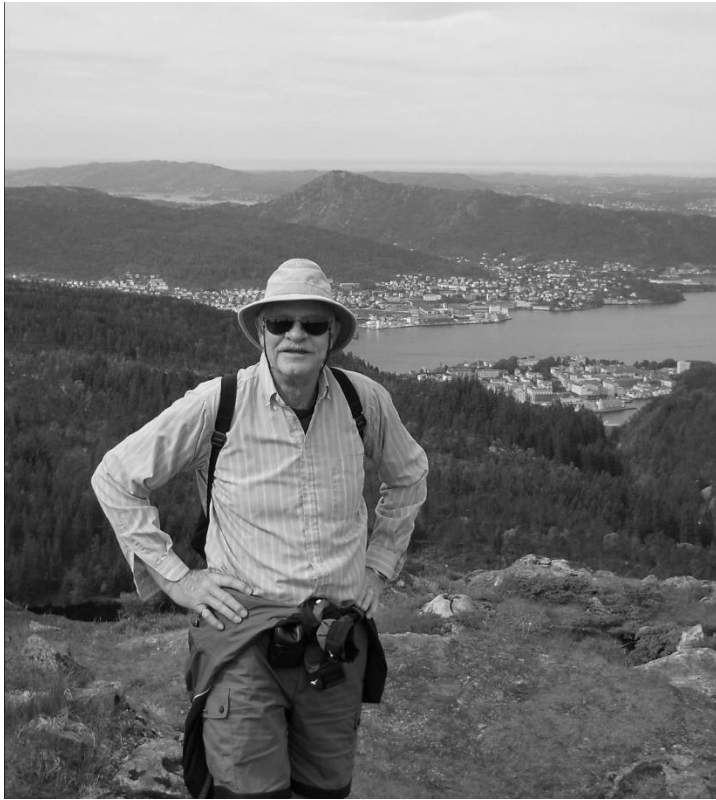
Mr. Beckett is a giant in the world of land conservation. He played a key part in saving the lands that we now know as Dundas Valley, from being a highway. He has recently published a book about his life and what it took to get conservation authorities up and running in the 1960's and 70's. The book is called My path to the Dundas Valley and is available in the library or select stores. It is such a positive story.

Speaking of being positive, a new Bruce Trail app should now be out and available. Memberships are at an all time high and all the guidebooks sold out in a year. More are being produced. On a personal note, I have now joined a great new Club called the "Retirees Club" and the benefits are time and sleep.

I hope everyone is having a great summer and we all look forward to a better fall season.

Paul Toffoletti

## In recognition of a long time supporter and valued volunteer - Gary Beaudoin



Gary became engaged with BTC about the time he and Ray Lowes worked in neighbouring offices at Stelco. Gary remembers asking Ray Lowes to contribute to a program for “young members” of the Metallurgical Society of America at Stelco. Ray graciously led them on a hike. Gary believes Ray probably influenced his passion for BTC. For fifty some years Gary Beaudoin has been supporting BTC ‘s mission to preserve a wilderness corridor along the Niagara escarpment.

Periodically Gary assisted local clubs with trail maintenance, then, like many of us, upon retirement Gary contacted BTC to extend his volunteer support for the

organization. In the late 1990’s BTC had been securing more land which in turn created a need to put in place a new team of volunteers who would be caretakers of this land, Land Stewards. Consequently Gary was asked to assist with the implementation of a new Land Stewardship program and organized the first Land Steward Workshop in 1999.

Gary volunteered to be a land steward himself but as Iroquoia had no property available to steward, he graciously accepted property in Toronto. Eventually Gary accepted another property, this time closer to home in the Iroquoia section and a third closer to his cottage in Beaver Valley. Over the last twenty years 17 properties, big and small, have been secured in the Iroquoia section and Gary became the Director of Land Stewards for the Club. This required him to sit on the Club’s Board. His contributions to the Board were thoughtful and constructive, always moving the organization forward. In the spring, Gary stepped down from the position of Director of Land Stewards and the IBTC Board of Directors.

This is just a snapshot of Gary’s volunteerism and history with BTC to date. His interest and volunteer contributions continue. Thank you Gary for helping us conserve the unique stretch of green space in our back yard.

## Trail Maintenance and Development Update

Tuesday work parties are slowly coming back into full swing. The primary work has been hazard tree removal and footpath improvements. Trail captains and monitors have continued to be busy trimming, reblazing and picking up garbage from their respective sections of the Main and Side Trails in the Iroquoia Club section.

Click on the following link to see a pictorial report on the trail maintenance teams activities prepared by Richard Pomeroy, Data Management Coordinator.Link:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/6iu56HX8qPgy3PKaA>



## Iroquoia Run for a great cause.

Back on January 10th, following a stroke suffered by my brother, I decided to run the 83 km that is the Niagara Section of the Bruce Trail to raise money for his medical bills, the longest run of my life by over 30 km.

After that run, I had it in the back of my mind that I wanted to tackle the Iroquoia section at some point. Seeing as its 122 km, I put the timetable on winter 2021/spring 2022. Well, I am an impatient person and decided on about a week's notice to run it on May 22nd this year. This time, I would raise money for Pathstone Mental Health, which provides mental health services to children of the Niagara region.

Because nothing is as fun as it is with friends, I recruited the help of several friends to accompany me. Geoff Gamble ran the first stretch, starting at 3am, then Denny Murray and Jessica Ranalli each ran two stretches of 15-20 km with some Derek Shevel time sprinkled in there, before I met up with Jonathon Toews and Steve Korchinos joined in for the final 25 km or so.



Throughout the day, the entirety of the day, we enjoyed the beautiful sites of the Iroquoia. All of the waterfalls were breathtaking, the many epic views of the escarpment and even the climbing of Mt. Nemo made for a great 19 hours, 53 minutes and 20 seconds (but who's counting).

My favorite moment was all six of us finishing together, wearing our headlamps with pride. The picture at the end of the Iroquoia is something that I will cherish forever.

## THE ROYAL OAK TREE OF SPEYSIDE

The story of the Royal Oak of Speyside actually starts in England in 1651. England was near the end of their civil war and King Charles II was trying to escape with his life after the battle of Worcester. He later reported that he had hid in an English Oak tree all day while parliamentary patrols searched for him. This tree became known as the Royal Oak tree and the English Oak got a new nick name. May 29th was celebrated as Royal Oak Day for centuries in England to mark the restoration of the monarchy.

In 1937, to celebrate the coronation of King George VI on May 12th, acorns from Windsor Park in England were sent all across the British Commonwealth.

A one room school stood on 22 Side Road north of Speyside. Students at SS#8 Dublin planted their acorn in a special evening ceremony in that year. When the school closed in 1960, they raised the money to have tree surgeons move the twenty foot high oak tree. They planted it beside the gym at the new school where it continues to grow. When the school closed in 1986, acorns were brought from England to plant "cousin" oak trees at Brookville, Limehouse, Pineview, and Stewarttown where the Speyside students were transferred.

The Royal Oak of Speyside received a heritage designation in 2007 for its cultural significance. A plaque, with the following inscription, was mounted on a stone near the tree. "Designated Tree 2007 – Speyside Royal Oak – Planted 1937 – Students of Dublin School planted an acorn from Windsor Park, England to mark the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. This oak provides a loving link to our heritage. – Heritage Halton Hills."



Since the tree is expected to live for up to 500 years any owner of the property is required to maintain it during its lifetime.

Today, the Royal Oak Tree stands beside a vacant, vandalized, school. No trespassing signs are posted at the entrances to the property. The plaque, that once honoured the tree, has been removed from the stone. Most, if not all, of the former students who witnessed the planting of the tree have passed away. Sadly, the tree appears to have seen better days. Looking at the tree, it reminded me of the Tony Orlando and Dawn song “Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree”. For a moment, I imagined the entire tree covered with yellow ribbons. As I turned to walk away, I thought I heard someone behind me say “It’s been eighty odd years, do they still want me?”

\*Directions to the Royal Oak Tree: Toronto Section of the Bruce Trail – At km 11.4, the main trail reaches the Pear Tree Park and a parking area at 15 Sideroad. The Trail turns right along the road into Speyside. At the stoplight turn left and follow Hwy 25 for approximately 500 metres. The vacant school is on the right side of the road.

If you would like to support the publishing of the book “100 Forgotten Sites – along the Bruce Trail” by receiving a copy of “100 Hikers 100 Hikes” please contact Andrew @ [acamani50@gmail.com](mailto:acamani50@gmail.com)



## **Hamilton ENVIRONMENTALISTS of the Year Awards**

The Hamilton’s Environmentalists of the Year Awards Committee is pleased to announce this year’s Environmentalist of the Year. Established in 1979, the Environmentalists of the Year Awards program recognizes the dedicated efforts of citizens, businesses and organizations to improve the environment in our community each year. Awards are usually presented at a community dinner during Environment Week in June, however this hasn’t been possible due to the ongoing restrictions caused by the pandemic.

This year (representing 2019 and 2020) we are recognizing **Thomas A. Beckett** of Dundas with a Lifetime Achievement Award to celebrate and honour his many decades of effort to preserve and protect nature in the Hamilton watershed.

For those familiar with the development of conservation authorities in Ontario, Tom needs no introduction. In Hamilton-Wentworth, his name is synonymous with our local conservation authority. A lawyer, Superior Court judge and former Ancaster councillor, he was instrumental in the 1958 founding of the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority. In 1966, the SCCA was renamed Hamilton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA) and Tom became its first Chair.

Our community has much to thank him for in this role, as he was the single most active individual in the late-1960s fight to prevent the construction of the current Highway 403 through the Dundas Valley. That battle and the land acquisition and securement for which he is well-known, preserved 1,200 hectares of Carolinian forests and fields,

coldwater streams and Niagara Escarpment geology. Tom Beckett served as HRCA Chairman until 1971 and later continued to be a valuable part of the environmental community, being recognized for his extraordinary contributions by the establishment of the 'Thomas A. Beckett Forest' within the Dundas Valley Conservation Area. The pandemic has shone a light on how important his work from decades ago continues to be to the health of both the environment and local residents, and he continues to advocate for environmental protection, most recently making his voice heard on Bill 229 and the ways in which it would undermine the work of conservation authorities across Ontario.

We look forward to being able to publicly recognize Tom Beckett at next year's Environmentalist of the Year awards dinner.

Who sponsors the Hamilton EOY Awards?

Prior to the pandemic, the Environmentalists of the Year Awards and dinner have been held annually since 1979. An independent committee of community members judges the nominations, which are sought from across the greater Hamilton area. The Awards program is co-sponsored by the Conserver Society of Hamilton and District, the United





Nations Association in Canada-Hamilton Branch, Hamilton Naturalists' Club, Environment Hamilton, Royal Botanical Gardens, Friends of Red Hill Valley, and the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club, with support from McMaster University and the Bay Area Restoration Council.

## **Exploring our biodiversity hotspot, the Cootes to Escarpment Fall Festival 2021**

Become an EcoPark Explorer! Learn from experts the basics of plant identification, birding, and backyard biodiversity. Take what you learn on a self-guided hike and stop by the EcoPark System pop-up booth for a family friendly activity!

These events will be held between September 14th and October 3rd, 2021.

### Event Details:

The Cootes to Escarpment Fall Festival 2021 is a series of workshops and weekend pop up booths. Events are scheduled between Tuesday September 14th and Sunday October 3rd.

Registration is required for the workshops. Attend all three to earn an EcoPark Explorer t-shirt.

- Plant ID Basics (Sept 14th or 16th from 6:00 to 7:30pm): Learn plant ID basics with Royal Botanical Gardens Herbarium Curator and Field Botanist Nadia Cavallin and the best local hiking spots from the Bruce Trail Conservancy Manager of Conservation and Trail, Adam Brylowski.
- Birding 101 (Sept 21st or 23rd from 6:00 to 7:30pm): The Hamilton Naturalists' Club Bird Study Group Director, Jackson Hudecki and Bruce Trail Conservancy Landowner Stewardship Coordinator and Ecologist, Mara McHaffie, will be talking birding basics and wildlife hotspots.
- Backyard Biodiversity (Sept 28th or 30th from 6:00 to 7:30pm): Join Conservation Halton Landowner Outreach Technician, Erin Mallon, and Hamilton Conservation Authority Watershed Stewardship Technician, Jeff Stock, as they talk about the things you can do in your own backyard to support local biodiversity.

Pop-up Booths: Saturday Sept 18th, 25th and Oct 3rd: Experts are organizing a pop-up booth and activity at three surprise EcoPark System locations. Come out for a self guided tour and opportunity to test what you have learned in nature. Locations will be announced at the workshops and on Ecopark System social media.

Registration: <https://bit.ly/ecoparkfestival>

If you would like more information about the event, please contact the Cootes to Escarpment Fall Festival Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Ms. Chelsea Braley a [cbraley@rbg.ca](mailto:cbraley@rbg.ca).

## Keep it Clean Challenge Badge

Recipients of this badge have helped preserve the natural wonders of the trail by removing trash and refuse left behind by thoughtless walkers and hikers.

We do this for the animals that strive to survive in the small pieces of wilderness along the trail. We do this because people are more apt to help keep a space clean if they find it uncluttered. We do this to help ensure the 700 landowners who allow us to cross their land will continue to do so.



When picking up garbage please identify hazardous materials, look for sharp items such as glass, metal edges or unknown liquids and leave these items for staff. You are advised to wear gloves for your own protection. After filling five plastic shopping bags of trash, please include a log with photos of your accomplishment when requesting the badge.

The badge is available to anybody who picks up garbage anywhere along the Bruce Trail spanning Niagara to Tobermory.

For information on how to purchase your badge please click this link: <https://www.iroquoia.on.ca/index.php/hiking/badges/>

# Junior Hiking Badge

Get your child hooked on hiking! Inspire your child to complete a three-kilometer seasonal hike and celebrate with a beautiful badge. Discover the joy and benefits of walking in the woodlands, meadows, and shorelines of the Bruce Trail. Share your favorite places on the Trail or take your child on mapped or guided Bruce Trail Club hikes.



Four distinct badges are available for a small fee, one for each season. Once your child has completed a hike in each season, a FREE Junior Hiker Badge (as pictured above) is awarded. All hikes do not need

to be completed in the same year.

See the badges on our Club webpage to learn more.

**FOLLOW THE BLAZES**  
the meaning of Blazes on The Bruce Trail

**Main Trail Blazes**

 <b>White Blaze</b> Represents a straight ahead hiking path	 <b>Tuxedo Blaze</b> Emphasizes white blaze	 <b>Left Turn</b> Indicates a noteworthy directional change in the Trail	 <b>Right Turn</b> Indicates a noteworthy directional change in the Trail
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**Side Trail Blazes**

 <b>Blue Blaze</b> Straight ahead on a Side Trail	 <b>Left Turn</b> Indicates a noteworthy directional change on a Side Trail	 <b>Right Turn</b> Indicates a noteworthy directional change on a Side Trail	 <b>End Blaze</b> Represents the end of a Side Trail
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Blazes are found on trees, fence posts, t-bar posts (in open areas), stiles, bridges, rocks, hydro poles, etc. Only Trails with White or Blue Blazes are managed by the nine member clubs of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Please stay on the Blazed Trail.

**USE AT YOUR OWN RISK**

The Bruce Trail Conservancy      info@bruce-trail.org      www.bruce-trail.org  
1-800-665-4453

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**Bruce Trail members can purchase a Conservation Halton Annual pass for a great reduced rate. This gives you access to all Conservation Halton parks for a year from the date of purchase (it can be purchased at the Conservation Head Office on Britannia Road when showing you Bruce Trail Membership Card)**

**Remember that Bruce Trail members can park for free at Tiffany Falls when you leave your membership card on the dashboard of your vehicle**