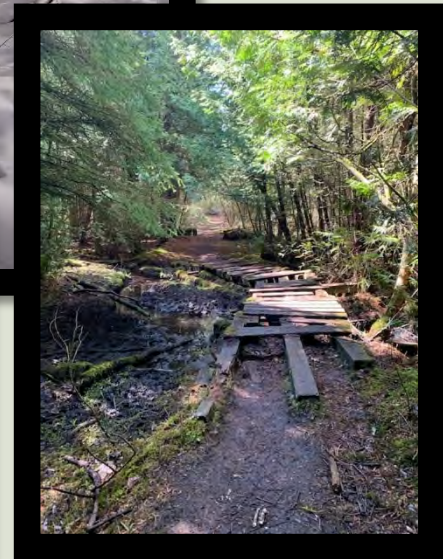


Oak Ridges Trail Association

ANNUAL REPORT

AGM 2021

"Building Pathways to an Active Lifestyle"



OAK RIDGES TRAIL ASSOCIATION –2021 ANNUAL REPORT

SHARED BY EMAIL DUE TO COVID 19

AGENDA

- 7:00** Welcome and call to order – Kevin Lowe
- Adoption of the agenda
- Approval of the Minutes for ORTA AGM 2020
- Recognition of Chapter Chairs & Recognition of Directors, Key Committee Members & Office Staff
- Awards and Presentations –Wilma Millage
- Treasurer’s Report – Bob Alexander
- Past President’s Report
- President’s Report
- Nominating Committee - Wilma Millage
- Adjournment of the Business Meeting - Kevin Lowe
- 7:45** Guest Speaker – Kevin Callan

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Eastern Region
Uxbridge

Photo Credits for Cover Page

- Allen Vodi - Fall 2020
- Fazyah Mohammed -Trillium Spring 2020
- Robert Schieck – Snow Hikers Dec 2020
- Bob Hughes – Couple on Bridge Nov 2020
- Patricia Descent – Bridgework May 2020

Thanks Michele, for the difficult task of choosing images for our annual cover!

Recognition Awards

Commendation

Trail Builders

Member of the Year

Lifetime Achievement

Director's and Key Committee Member's Reports:

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Nomination Committee Report

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Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting

The World Health Organization declared Covid 19, Coronavirus to be a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. The Province of Ontario declared a state of emergency on March 17, 2020 and over the next days any place where people gathered was shut down or restricted. At the meeting of the Board on March 28, 2020 held by teleconference, it was sadly determined that our AGM, Adventure Relay, Discovery Nights and guided hikes would have to be cancelled until notified otherwise. Our website was updated to reflect this decision.

It was further decided that our Annual Report to our Membership would be enhanced to include more robust reports in addition to the traditional ones to simulate any words we would have shared at the AGM in person. Motions which require consent would be distributed by way of email along with a survey allowing for yes/no/comments. For those without an email contact, a phone call would be made.

What follows is the email sent to the membership on April 22, 2020:

Dear Member,

Annual General Meetings (AGM) provide one of the opportunities our members have to question the board, engage directly with the directors and committee heads, and hear the views of other members. However, the outbreak of the Coronavirus is causing organizations like ours to rethink our arrangements for 2020 AGM in light of bans on large gatherings, travel restrictions and that venues selected for the meetings have been closed. We are fortunate that with our other events like Discovery Night and communication systems like email, website, facebook and hikes themselves, our members have opportunities throughout the year to engage with their fellow members and board. We appreciate how many of our members do use email, but for those remaining we will be contacting them by phone.

As you know due to Covid-19 our AGM scheduled for April 16th, 2020 was cancelled. Instead your electronic copy of The Oak Ridges Trail Association 2020 Annual Report is attached for you to download and read. This document contains the 2019 minutes of the AGM from page 3 to 6 as well as all the new reports and award presentations.

Also attached is the 2019 Financial Statement from Paul Stainton Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants.

[2020 AGM Reports and Minutes of Previous 2019 AGM](#)

[2019 Financial Statements](#)

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How to VOTE:

- Read the information within the two pdf attachments.
- Read the 5 MOTIONS below.
- If you wish to APPROVE ALL 5 of the motions, please just hit reply on this email and type APPROVE ALL in the subject line.
- Otherwise you can open the separate email poll that was sent to you titled: 2020 Annual Report MOTIONS TO APPROVE and follow the questions there.
- **VOTING ENDS APRIL 30th, 2020.**

1. Motion to approve the minutes from the ORTA AGM 2019 as printed in the report provided to the membership. Moved by Lissa Dwyer and seconded by Michele Donnelly.

2. Motion that the Annual Report which includes Reports provided by Chapter Chairs, of Directors, Key Committee Members & Office Staff be recognized and accepted. Moved by Lissa Dwyer and Seconded by Michele Donnelly.

3. Motion to adopt 2019 Financial Statements as presented in the Treasurer's Report. Moved by Bob Alexander and Seconded by Michele Donnelly

4. Motion to reappoint Paul Stainton as Auditor for 2020. Moved by Bob Alexander and seconded by Michele Donnelly.

5. Motion by the Nominations Committee to adopt the listed slate of Board of Directors for 2020-2021 as presented in the Annual Report. Moved by Wilma Millage and seconded by Kevin Lowe.

Should any serious debate arise concerning the motions presented, the secretary will include this in a follow-up email to the members. In this case, a new vote would take place and you will be asked if you are "In Favour" of the new motion.

If you have any questions or comments you may contact either Michele Donnelly 905-833-6600 or email info@oakridgestrail.org or Lissa Dwyer, Secretary at secretary@oakridgestrail.org

Happy Earth Day

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This notice sent April 22, 2020 via Michele Donnelly, Office Manager. You are receiving this message due to its importance to members.

We received a remarkable response to our email with 75% (382) being opened for review. More importantly, we received 118 responses of 'all approved' to our motions. Only minor changes were made as a result and the amended Annual Report has been posted to the ORTA website.

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CHAPTER CHAIR AND REGIONAL REPORTS 2021

WESTERN REGION REPORT

Brian Millage, Regional Director

King, Ed Millar, Chapter Chair

2020 started out like any other year with the winter months providing the usual number of tree falls which had to be cleaned up. As the year progressed and word that a new virus was starting to spread around the globe King was busy planning two boardwalk projects in MaryLake. Lumber was acquired, cut, and moved to the sites just as shutdowns became a reality. Once everything was assembled and with the help of volunteer **Bill Fines** the two boardwalks were constructed before the end of May. By this time Seneca and the Nature Conservancy trails in the Happy Valley were closed. MaryLake, Township and TRCA trails remained open and were well used by both hikers and locals. King section carried out the usual routine repair and maintenance i.e. grass cutting during the lockdown and received a much appreciated assist from Seneca College with the reopening of that property.

Caledon, Neil McGeachy, Chapter Chair & Brian Millage, Regional Chair

In the early days of the covid lockdown we were faced with the challenge of completing spring trail surveys and completing needed trail maintenance in Caledon, where we have few Trail Captains. Chapter Chair **Neil McGeachy, Wilma** and I started the process from Hwy 27 westwards. Then I am pleased to say we were joined by **Rodney Harrison** on about a dozen occasions as we worked our way towards our western trailhead in Glen Haffy, where we meet the Bruce Trail. His assistance was much appreciated. The main chore was the removal of numerous trees and branches that had fallen during high winds, plus the removal of sapling growth crowding the trails. Several of the Uxbridge Trail Captains again assisted with Caledon trail operations.

Since then, **Cheryl and Steve Fisher** of Schomberg have stepped forward as Trail Captains. Their first challenge was assisting in the removal of a mass of jack pine trees that were blocking the trail west of Albion Trail Rd.- this did not deter their enthusiasm. As the year came to a close, **Neal Stein** stepped forward to also volunteer as a Caledon Trail Captain bringing with him experience as a Bruce Trail sawyer and trail worker- welcome to the team.

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CENTRAL REGION REPORT

Frank Alexander, Regional Director

Aurora, Bruce Corbett, Chapter Chair

Unlike most other chapters, the Aurora Chapter does not face many maintenance challenges since our trails are managed by the Town, the Municipality or the Region. So, the main duties of the Oak Ridges Trail Association volunteers are to blaze trail, manage signage, tidy up details such as overgrowth removal and liaise with the other authorities on any issues that need their attention. We do run Spring and Fall inspections on each of the four segments of the Chapter's trails. **Mel Rosenfeld** handles the east from Bayview Avenue to Woodbine via the Vandorf Sideroad. **Jody Raffensperger** captains the Sheppard's Bush trails. **Kevin Prins** has the Town trail. **Mike and Nancy O'Reilly** keep a loving eye on the Case Woodlot to Bathurst Street. Many of us walk our trails and do informal inspections throughout the winter months as well. This year, Fall inspections at Woodbine revealed the loss of some ash trees which bore our blazes. New blaze locations were found and appropriately decorated. In Sheppard's Bush, the usual trimming and blaze refreshing got done. These trails were temporarily closed early in the Covid 19 time but all trails are now open with Covid cautions for trail use posted on signs. In the Case Woodlot, we did some repairs on the old section of the boardwalk to bring it up to the standard of the new boardwalk across the boggy part of the trail. **Mike and Nancy O'Reilly** are independently removing patches of garlic mustard at several locations along the trail. We need help with a sign at Bathurst but we have been waiting to request this help from the Town while they deal with other more pressing issues. In December 2020 and March 2021, Julien Robertson, who leads a group called the Homegrown Society, organized groups of volunteers to find and destroy egg deposits of the Gypsy Moth on trees in the Case Woodlot. Among the volunteers were **the Corbetts, the Prins and the O'Reillys**. This forest seemed particularly hard hit by the moth. Julien's groups harvested kilograms of egg deposits so thousands more leaves will stay on the trees through 2021! Trails and sidewalks everywhere are seeing unusually heavy use during our Covid 19 pandemic as people stay local, walk for exercise or just to get outside for a change. It is a time when many people are discovering a new appreciation for the off-road trails and, we hope, a new gratitude for the trails' existence and for the people who maintain them.

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Richmond Hill, Weibo Cheng, Chapter Chair

With the COVID Ontario lockdowns, ORTA stopped leading hikes and public events have been restricted. For our chapter, it has meant no new local Chapter meetings, festival booths or public meetings have been organized, but trail inspection activities have carried on as usual.

Spring trail inspection:

We conducted trail inspections from West side (All trails between Bathurst St and Yonge St, and Jefferson Rd and Newbridge Ave on May 28/29 by **Glenn Murphy**) to East Side (Main trail on east side of Bayview Ave between Stouffville Rd and Bethesda Sideroad. Trail passes under Bayview at an overpass also inspected on June 1 by **Gaye Spence & John Weston**)

The inspection was completed successfully and we were happy to start the first-time inspection by new trail captain **Glenn Murphy**. Thanks, Glenn, for your hard work! As usual the east side inspection was completed by our long-time trail captains Gaye Spence and John Weston. Thank you, **Gaye Spence and**



John Weston, for the dedicated hard work!

Because of you, the trail was inspected properly and issues were reported to Central Region and TRCA. Due to the increased use of the trail, more litter was picked up. Overall, the trail was in good condition.

Fall trail inspection:

East side trail inspection was carried out on Oct. 25 by trail captains **Gaye Spence and John Weston**. During the inspection, it was noted that one bike trail was under construction. TRCA has upgraded this trail and it is essentially complete. Litter amount was reduced but the garage cans at Old Colony Rd are full.

West side trail inspection was carried on Nov. 6 by **Glenn Murphy**. Glenn noted the trail was very clean and minimal litter collected. A private notice addressing the need to "not litter" has been attached to Marker Post 6. **See photo to the left**

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During the pandemic and the social distancing recommendation, it was very hard for trail captains to carry on the inspection last fall. We really thank our trail captains for both sides.

After the pandemic is over, we will be looking for more events such as Richmond Hill's Canada Day celebration to promote our hiking program and membership, recruit more volunteers to help out our trail inspection and maintain activity.

Whitchurch-Stouffville, Frank Alexander, Chapter Chair

Note: Besides this report, please see the high quality W-S Summer/Fall 2020 Chapter illustrated report on the ORTA website home page under the "Chapters" tab and then under the "Whitchurch-Stouffville" tab. Here is the direct link: https://oakridgestrail.org/files/2816/0614/7594/Fall_2020Frank_Report.pdf With the Corona Virus lockdowns, ORTA work has in general been restricted. For our chapter, it has meant that no festival booths or public meetings have been organized, but trail maintenance activities have carried on as usual.

In the Spring of 2020, ORTA had temporarily suspended its organized hiking program. However, the major conservation authorities in the Central Region, including TRCA, York Region Forestry (YRF), and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA), had opened all or most (in the case of LSRCA) of their trails. (For LSRCA, Pangman Springs remained closed until the Fall so was not available for the Spring inspection). By all accounts, the trails were well-used. People took advantage of the benefits of nature as other pursuits were still restricted. Therefore, the conservation authorities welcomed our offer to do Spring and Fall trail inspections and year-round maintenance of these trails.

Spring 2020 Trail Inspections

Trail sections had been increased in the Fall of 2019 from nine to eleven by dividing two tracts to accommodate new trail captains (two captains are assigned to each section). However, two captains were unavailable for the Spring inspections so a big thanks to **Tracy McNaught** and **Ryan Zyltra** for doing double duty on the inspections to compensate.

The inspections were completed successfully. No major issues except, due to increased use by new hikers, there was increased litter to be picked up, especially in the parking lots.

Summer 2020 Trail Maintenance

Our trail captains did not stop checking their trails with the conclusion of the formal Spring inspections. They visit their trails regularly, so continued checking

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their trails in the summer months. The Fall trail report, cited above, details seven reports of trail issues investigated during the summer months. As always, these reports were conveyed to YRF and LSRCA authorities who responded to them.

Fall 2020 Trail Inspections

We welcomed new trail captains **Caroline Schweitzer** and **Robert Robotham**. The Fall trail inspections occurred between Oct. 17th and November 10th. Eleven teams of two trail captains each inspected the eleven trail sections for which the W-S chapter is responsible. These 22 trail captains maintain the ORTA trail and all blue-blazed side trails in the eight YRF forest tracts and two LSRCA forest tracts in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The details of each of the Fall inspections are given in the Fall 2020 report for the W-S chapter (see the link at the beginning of this report). This report is illustrated with pictures of the trail captains at work and the issues they deal with. Also included are trail maintenance reports over the summer of 2020 after the Spring inspections, and further trail checking after the formal Fall inspections have ended. This makes the point that trail maintenance is a year-round activity and our trail captains visit their trails regularly to deal with issues such as fallen trees. Their goal is to keep the trails clean and safe for all users.

Emergency Wind Storm Inspection

Shortly after the completion of the Fall trail inspections, we were notified about wide-spread damage caused by high winds, so we organized a special Wind Storm Inspection of all our trails. Big credit goes to our trail captains who responded quickly to this emergency despite having recently spent considerable time on the Fall inspections. Reports received were sent to YRF and LSRCA, who responded promptly. These reports indicate how right we were to do these special inspections:

Eldred King main trail: no trees down on the main trail but Halina found two trees down across the side trail

Patterson – Ruth found 3 large trees across the trail

Eldred King Side Trail: Rob R found five trees down across the trail

Robinson Side Trail and Whitchurch CA: Cornelius found two trees down, one in each tract, including one smashing the Whitchurch CA boardwalk.

Hollidge: Rob L. (with Noel following up) “no major trees down just some debris”

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Hall Main: Tracy checked -- no trees down

Hall Side: Tracy (with Vicky following up) -- one large tree down

Clarke: Daniel -- one fallen tree across the trail

Dainty: Rob & Mel -- "cleared away a couple of fallen trees plus plenty of branches" (nothing to report to YRF)

Robinson Main: Jim -- trails are clear

Porritt & Pangman Springs: Josie -- "fallen trees everywhere but mostly on the north-east section, toward Kennedy rd. Some trees are small however three or four are very big."

YRF and LSRCA were apprised about all of these. Besides these large trees, trail captains were quite busy clearing off debris from the storm (including branches and small trees) that they could move. Hardest hit of these appear to be Dainty, Porritt (which also reported three large trees down), and Hollidge. A big thank you goes to all the trail captains that participated in these special inspections.

Continuing Inspections

The trail captains continue to check their trails throughout the winter months with one fallen tree across the Eldred King side trail reported in January.

EASTERN REGION REPORT

Brian Millage, Regional Director

Uxbridge, Co-Chairs Jon McPhee & Brian Millage

You probably won't be surprised to hear that with almost no guided hikes over the past year, there have been twice as many hikers on Uxbridge trails. Many of these were previously introduced to these wonderful trail options through ORTA guided hikes, or by using our guidebook- then word spread. Hikers, dog walkers, cyclists, equestrians, cross country skiers etc., flooded the trail systems in an attempt to allay the boredom and stress of a covid year. A mixed blessing, as on the one hand, more people have been introduced to this wonderful natural resource, but on the other hand, parking lots have been overcrowded and trails in popular areas have been over used. Please diversify and try to discover those lesser used routes along the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail and elsewhere.

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ORTA maintenance crews have continued to monitor and improve trails while working individually or in small, distanced groups. We have co-ordinated with Green Durham on several occasions to remove old boardwalks, clear trails and improve signage. Another specific project was the installation of 13 wooden benches over the many Uxbridge trails at scenic locations. A local landowner milled and donated the lumber, and ORTA members helped saw, build and install the benches. We hope you discover them- eg Secord and Goodwood Tracts, just to mention two, where you can sit and enjoy the water features and waterfowl.

Our thanks to the Great/Trans Canada Trail group for funding the purchase of two new trail mowers to be shared by Green Durham and ORTA. These will greatly increase our ability to more easily maintain safe trails through meadow sections, hopefully keeping ticks at a distance. As part of the route from Durham Forest along ORTA trails to the northern point of the Rouge National Urban Park, new signage has been installed at trailheads. Currently, Parks Canada is working to complete the trail link between the ORTA trail in Goodwood, southwards through the Glasgow/Coyote trail to the Durham Townline which will allow passage to their trail hub at Reesor Rd and Elgin Mills. More to explore and to spread out the many trail walkers.

My thanks to the ORTA Trail Captains for their many hours spent clearing fallen trees and maintaining these trails.

No Scugog Report this year.

RECOGNITION AWARDS

Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit nominations for the 2021 awards. As we are sharing the Annual Report in advance, only the categories will be shared. We hope that you'll join us on the 22nd to learn about this year's honourees.

Commendations

Trail Builders

Member of the Year

Lifetime Achievement

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HIKE PROGRAM

Malcolm Hann, ORTA Hike Coordinator

The hiking challenge:

The impact of the covid-19 pandemic to our 2020 hike program was significant.

From total shut down of all activities including trail closures to restrictions on gatherings.

On the positive side:

Vaccines that have the potential to get us back to our pre-pandemic hiking activities are on the way..... there is light at the end of a very long dark tunnel!

Whilst I've hiked for many years my wife never ventured onto the trails preferring yoga to get her regular exercise. To meet the pandemic restriction the yoga classes were cancelled. Initially my wife thought to do her yoga at home but soon found that didn't work for her and has taken up walking with me every day on the forest trails I used to frequent on ORTA guided hikes. I often meet ORTA members also walking the trails in small groups who aren't waiting at home for the ORTA guided hike program to re-start. If you are new to walking the trails in unguided groups, please make sure one of you in the group knows the trail or carry a trail map.

Often the forest trailhead parking lots are absolutely packed with cars (have you been to Eldred King on a weekend?) But the forests are so large there is plenty of space for one to walk the trails without meeting others. It appears the trails are getting a good work out during the pandemic!

Registration process for guided hikes:

For ORTA to offer guided hikes during the pandemic the hikes have to meet the restrictions. **Michele Donnelly** and **Bob Comfort** came to our rescue developing a hiker registration process and hike statistical tracking that hike leaders were comfortable with while adhering to government restrictions.

The registration process was a complete success. Many members remarked how well the process worked for them. Please join me in thanking Michele and Bob for their efforts to keep us hiking.

2020 hike program:

We started the year (pre-pandemic) with a strong offering of 51 hikes as posted in the Winter Trail Talk. At the end of March several hikes were cancelled as Government restrictions became more onerous. Even the forest trails were closed to hiking for a time. There were no guided hikes April through mid June.

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As the restrictions eased the registration process mentioned above was used to re-start our guided hiking program. Late June through December, 102 hikes were completed. Nearly 1,000 hikers participated in these hikes. However, once again restrictions in late December resulted in a few posted hikes being cancelled. Overall ORTA provided about a third of our usual guided hikes..... Not so shabby given what we had to work with.

Seasoned hike leaders:

Out of caution, several ORTA hike leaders decided not to lead guided hikes during the pandemic restrictions. Others are undecided whether they will lead hikes until there is a solution to the pandemic. ORTA is likely to be looking to add many new hike leaders once the pandemic is solved and Hike Ontario starts training classes again.

We need new hike leaders:

All ORTA hike leaders are required to be Hike Ontario certified. Hike Ontario usually hold several training classes throughout the year in various locations around the Province but pandemic seriously impacted this offering. Once the pandemic is solved, I anticipate Hike Ontario will be stretched to meet pent up demand for these training classes. Please let me know if you're interested to become an ORTA hike leader when the pandemic is solved.

End to end hikes in 2020:

E2Enders are not required to be ORTA members just participate! Even with covid, 8 hikers completed their end to end hike across the ORM and received an ORTA E2E commemorative badge for their effort.

Congratulations to:

Veronique Grandioux

Michael Hook

Kyoungwan Kim (non-member yet!)

Han Koren (non-member yet!)

Danielle Koren (non-member yet!)

Sandy Simmons

John Simmons

Terri Tworzyanski

One hiker recorded on Facebook they just finished their end to end recently without guidebook (currently in reprint), just followed the trail blazes a thank you to all our trail maintenance folk.

My hope is you experience great hikes on the Oak Ridge Trail accompanied by a wonderful group of hiking friends in 2021.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Bob Alexander, Treasurer

Our 2020 financial plan called for a major shortfall of \$22.4K due to the Covid pandemic and the resulting cancellation of the Adventure Relay. However, we ended up with a surplus of \$4.4K! How did this happen? Well, there are three main reasons:

1. We received \$11.7K from the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy program from the Federal government to help offset our wage costs.
2. We received a grant of \$10.0K from Green Durham through TRCA for the trail work Brian Millage and his gang did on the Secord and Goodwood trails.
3. Our individual members came through big time with increased donations and membership dues of almost \$5K.

Overall revenues were up \$12K from 2019. This was due to the above items of \$26K offset largely by onetime 2019 donations of \$10K and reduced Discovery Night revenues of \$2K.

Overall expenditures were down almost \$8K. Trail maintenance costs were down \$1K, Meeting costs were down by \$3K, both due to Covid, and Trail Talk expenses were down \$3K

Our overall operations plan for 2021 calls for a net shortfall of \$16.4K, largely due to the cancellation once again of the Adventure Relay. I have also assumed that we will not receive any major donations or meaningful Government assistance. While this is a significant shortfall for the ORTA, we have an ample cash position to handle this and will still finish the year with approximately \$74K in cash and investments.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the help and support of Simonetta Fellin and Michele Donnelly who do most of the accounting work and deserve all the credit.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Summary financial information (2020 and 2019 reconciled with externally reviewed statements)

(000's omitted)

	<u>PLAN 2021</u>	<u>ACTUAL 2020</u>	<u>ACTUAL 2019</u>
Total assets	<u>94.1</u>	<u>110.5</u>	<u>108.2</u>
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4.5	4.5	6.6
Net Assets	<u>89.6</u>	<u>106.0</u>	<u>101.6</u>
General Operations:			
Revenues	49.6	61.4	49.4
Expenditures	(66.0)	(57.0)	(64.6)
(Operating shortfall) excess	<u>(16.4)</u>	<u>4.4</u>	<u>(15.2)</u>
Adventure Relay:			
Revenues	0	0	22.3
Expenditures	0	0	(5.4)
Adventure Relay net	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>16.9</u>
Overall net (shortfall) excess	<u>(16.4)</u>	<u>4.4</u>	<u>1.7</u>

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ADVENTURE RELAY 2020

Michele Donnelly, Relay Chair

Well it certainly has been an exceptional year! At the Steering committee meeting held March 7, 2020, in the comfort of the Millage's living room, we were already well into the planning for what was to be our 14th annual Relay to be held June 13th 2020. We already had flyers printed and facilities book. One of the last things on our agenda that day was COVID-19. It was noted that conferences, concerts and travel plans were starting to be cancelled and we weren't sure yet what changes we were going to have to make. We discussed areas identified as more crowded during relay and preparation for the relay such as our training sessions, registration desk, launch and our award ceremony on relay day. What would that do to our relay? How would we be able to sanitize pens and registrations tables, and keep everyone safe? At that time we hoped that the peak would happen later in April and we would address these new concerns then. As things progressed, we held a virtual GoTo Meeting on April 2nd and reluctantly reported that the Relay was cancelled for 2020.

Our next meeting was held November 26, 2020 via Zoom and discussed reasons why we couldn't go forward with a 2021 Relay either. You see, we start planning for the June event in November and we have to be ready for a February launch date for registrations and unfortunately, just like some of our racers during the relay, we weren't out of the woods yet. Our disappointment was apparent as Covid-19 was still putting a damper on so many events like ours.

In hindsight, our decisions were prudent ones and we look forward to everyone meeting again in the future to enjoy a fun day of comradery, team building and showcasing the beautiful trails on the Oak Ridges Moraine to the many racers that participate. We missed you all!

Thank you to my fellow committee members and to all the volunteers that give so much of their time; **Bob Alexander, Frank Alexander, Noel Carey, Judy Carey, Bob Comfort, Judy Pergau, Carol Dowell, Huw Evans, Tracy Calver-Ing, Wally Kemp, Wilma Millage, Brian Millage, Garry Niece.**

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MEMBERSHIP

Michele Donnelly / Veronique Grandioux, Membership Coordinator

Membership grew in 2020.

Family 319 / 84 new

Single/Individual 192 / 35 new

Lifetime 85 / 3 new

Student 1 / 0 new

2020 showed 35 new single memberships compared to 27 in 2019 and family memberships jumped to 84 as compared to 54 in 2019. Lifetime members had 3 new join the ranks vs 2, with no new student memberships to report.

Remembering that family membership will be multiplied by 1.25 (319 x 1.25) to reflect our base; ORTA has a total of 677 active members. This, in part, can be indicative of the importance of the trail system.

There have been two new choices added for Volunteer positions; Trail Captain and Photography. If you are a Trail Captain already, please check this box the next time you log in. Those of you that are posting photos on our social media platforms, or take pictures at our events please update your profile to include Photography in your volunteer preferences. Members should update their selections annually. If something is no longer of interest, just uncheck it and check the ones you would like to be involved in.

This past year as seen an influx of new members from diverse demographics, and with varying goals and expectations pertaining to their choices of becoming members of ORTA. The prevailing theme for many was the need to “escape” the quarantine if only for a few short hours. Many discovered hidden gems within their own backyards and reaped the beneficial effects on their mental health and their physical being. The organized hikes provided many with an opportunity to meet fellow hikers and socialize at a time when so many struggle with solitude. The majority of the members that I spoke to expressed their gratitude for the Volunteer Hike Leaders and the opportunity this gave them. ORTA is in an excellent position to further cultivate their relationship with longstanding and new members and create new and exciting opportunities to widen their base. The addition of more led hikes, and an increase in its social media presence would help solidify this relationship. The upcoming release of the Guidebook is being received with much anticipation and may generate additional interest from non-members.

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PAST-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Wilma Millage, Past-President

A rather quiet year for all of us with hikes being limited and group maintenance outings as well. Brian and I continued leading hikes when allowed and often did maintenance outings while we were out on the trails at other times. Hiking and canoeing were the saviours of our sanity during the past year. Continuing to serve on the Relay Committee this year was a disappointment as well since we once again had to cancel the event.

Our Awards Committee decided that we would hold off presenting the awards last year in favour of possibly being able to present them in person at this year's AGM.... Well, you know how that worked out with Covid continuing and even getting worse once again. We will be combining the two years in presentations at this year's ZOOM meeting.

We continue to work on updating the Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority (LSRCA) agreement and Bill Salmon has signed his again for the Happy Valley sidetrail.

All of our Board Members have once again agreed to continue in their roles for the coming year. We were able to meet several times during the past year via ZOOM and we are getting much more competent and at ease with this means of getting together.

Keep well folks, and we hope to be able to meet with you personally at our next AGM in 2022.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Kevin Lowe, President

It seems odd writing this recap of the year 2020 with so little to say. The arrival of the pandemic has thrown life in general into an ominous situation and the operations of the Oak Ridges Trail Association into many challenging circumstances.

The on again off again saga of our guided hiking program has limited our hike offerings dramatically because of repeated cancellations. We have lost established hike leaders as well as some who are reluctant to volunteer in these challenging times. On the positive side, the hikes we were able to offer were all filled promptly as members wanted to get out to enjoy the out of doors.

The refinement and implementation of a new hike booking system open to members which allowed us to track the number of attendees and monitor Covid

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conditions compliance was a positive outcome also. More details of hiking can be found in Hike Coordinator **Malcolm Hann**'s report.

A leader training session was to be held in April. However with Covid that was not possible. Hopefully there will be an opportunity in 2021 as we have a number of members interested in becoming certified hike leaders.

Our membership numbers grew in 2020 which assisted our finances. Welcome to all of our new members. Again check out the membership report in this package.

In terms of finance, we had to cancel the Adventure Relay not only in 2020 but will also have to do so in 2021. This loss of revenue is a significant issue for us. Fortunately thanks to some deft work by our treasurer **Bob Alexander**, we were able to access sources of some federal grant money. A significant amount was also donated by the Green Durham Foundation. In addition, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the many members who donated to ORTA amounts in excess of their membership fees. These amounts and leaning on our reserve funds has carried us to this point. Again further detail is available in the Treasurer's report.

As always, thanks are due to our Board members for their dedication and continued work in support of ORTA. Also kudos go to Michele Donnelly, our office manager, for keeping us all on such an even keel.

Stay safe out there all and we look forward to better times to come.

