

Contact us at: collingwoodprobus@gmail.com

## 2021 APRIL NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING THURSDAY MAY 6, 2021 – ZOOM**  
[10:30 am start] || [10 am – start of pre-meeting hook-up period]

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- PRESIDENT: MIKE MARTYNUK • PAST PRESIDENT: GREG GEEN
- SPEAKERS: RUBEN ROSEN • SOCIAL: DOUG BROWN
- MEMBERSHIP: JOHN MEGARRY • VICE PRESIDENT: TERRY BILLO
- SECRETARY: GREG GEEN • TREASURER: GERRY MCGHEE
- NEWSLETTER: GORD HALL

### NEWS OF THE IMPORTANT KIND

► **MAY 6** (Thursday) **May meeting.** Zoom app opens at 10am \ Meeting starts at 10:30am. (Watch for the Zoom Meeting invitation coming on Wednesday, May 5, 2021).

Our Speaker: David T. Chapman, PH.D., P.GEOPH., FEC (HON), Consultant Emeritus, will present on some of the most beautiful and extreme weather we see and experience in Canada. David's work has been featured on The Weather Network, Global, CTV, CTV National, City TV, CBC Toronto and the like.

► Tip of Our Hats \ Caps to our long time member George Christie (since 1995) for his outstanding contribution to Collingwood's trail system. Mr. Trails was featured in the April 21, 2021 issue of Barrie Today. A copy of the article follows this Newsletter.

► Tip of Our Hats \ Caps to our long time member Jim McClure (since 2004 ) and his better half, Betsy McClure, upon their celebration of sixty years of marriage. Perhaps we can persuade Betsy to address the Club on the secrets of her accomplishment !

► We are really looking forward to getting back to normal in the months ahead with the usual Club events & activities. Vaccinations may accelerate in the weeks ahead. Hopefully, we will be able to meet up in person at our Annual General Meeting ! We have booked our Christmas Luncheon for December 2, 2021 at the Alpine Ski Club's lovely facility.

▶ Our Club's new year starts on July 1, 2021.

▶ To keep current, check out our up-to-date website:

[www.probuscollingwood.ca](http://www.probuscollingwood.ca).

▶ Future Events – stay tuned for updates on the following outdoor activities:

- i) possible members' car rally – rescheduled to this Fall during the peak colour period
- ii) local biking
- iii) restart of golfing

### ▶ Updated Member Incentive Program

Upon bringing a friend as a guest to any of our Zoom meetings, the Membership Chair will generate a “Guest Pass” card that captures the guest's contact info, plus the name of the introducing Member. If the guest ends up joining the Club, then the introducer will receive a LCBO gift card certificate or, if he prefers, three fifty \ fifty tickets at the next monthly meeting following payment of the new member's annual dues.

## IN MEMORIAM

We regret to announce the recent passing of long time member and prominent entrepreneur John Wiggins on April 10, 2021. John was an original member of Devil's Glen Ski Club and moved to Creemore following his retirement from a career as a designer in advertising & advertising in Toronto. He founded Creemore Springs Brewery in 1987 – which revitalized a somewhat downtrodden Creemore and “put it on the map”. John joined our Club in 2003. He resided at the Shipyards in recent years where he had a great view of Collingwood's harbour (including the grain Terminals of which he wasn't shy on expressing his opinions). The Family has indicated that there will be a celebration of John's life at a later date once Covid and restrictions related thereto subside. View and listen to the rendition of The Parting Glass tribute and John in his own words on the Club's website at:

[www.probuscollingwood.ca/2021/04/13/in-memoriam-6/](http://www.probuscollingwood.ca/2021/04/13/in-memoriam-6/)

## **OUR APRIL ZOOM MEETING**

### **THE OPENING**

- Members joined in from their homes to a rendition of O' Canada .
- Our “B” team handled the Zoom requirement as our tech wizard Mr. Megarry was recuperating at home following a “secret procedure.”
- President Mike extended greetings to all Members. He reminded Members of the importance of inviting friends to a Zoom meeting – please advise John Megarry and he will send a ZOOM INVITE by e-mail. New member Terry Gates was welcomed. Terry initially attended a Club meeting about a year ago. Sandy White joined us from British Columbia. Our Speaker presented from Alberta.

### **OUR SPEAKER – ENGINEER JIM HENDERSON**

#### **Adventures of a Geophysicist Born in Collingwood**

“I went to school in Collingwood with a Virginia Smart. Living in Collingwood actually resulted in my having a lifelong interest in water. It has been one of the tragedies of living for so long in Calgary that I miss being by a large body of water. My M.E.Des was coming up with an Ecosystem Approach to Groundwater Management for North and South Pender Islands on the west coast of British Columbia. My PhD continued my research on those islands. In my career I have worked in every province and territory in Canada with the exception of PEI. This includes working beneath Lake Huron in a salt mine and under the Atlantic in a coal mine. I have had the opportunity to work in New Caledonia, Nigeria, Brazil, Madagascar, and the United Arab Emirates. Around all of the work time, I have managed to run 10 marathons and many half-marathons, 10 kms, and 5 kms road races. It is a long way from my humble beginnings in Collingwood delivering the Toronto Telegram. The last time that I was in Collingwood was about 3 years ago. It has changed a great deal. ”

ED : Check out the last three !

Geophysicists apply the principles and concepts of physics, mathematics, geology, and engineering to the study of the physical characteristics of the earth and other planets. As a geophysicist, you would measure gravity and magnetic fields, seismic waves, temperatures, and natural electric current.

After high school in Collingwood, Jim left to attend the University of Toronto for the commencement of his specialized studies. He has always been a serious runner – not sure if this was an asset during his encounters with wildlife during his career working across the globe. Jim ended up marrying one of President Mike’s first cousins.

Jim’s slide focused presentation, after a shaky start with our technology, quickly became a real success and captivated the keen interest of our Members – as was evidenced by the Q&A questions and comments that followed.

## **SOME HIGHLIGHTS**

- Work Environment

Cold or hot or insect infected ( horse flies \ deer flies ]

- **Herschel Island** [island in the Beaufort Sea ] – whaling station in the late 1800s. Dog sleds.
- Permafrost in Canadian Arctic – up to seven hundred feet deep
- **Milk River** – site of old Buffalo bones dump – Buffalos chased off the abutting cliff
- **Canmore Sinkhole**
- **Mount Polley** mine's tailings facility experienced a dam breach and tailings spill that began on August 4, 2014
- Project **beneath the Atlantic** near Cape Breton [ CAPC Development Corporation ] – constant dripping of water
- **Beneath Lake Huron** working in salt mines

“ Water & salt mines don’t go together ”

- **Nigeria** – great photo of black skin children \ soil is all red  
Excellent pictures – gifts of tee shirts – “ better than \$USD”
- **Madagascar** – great sides  
Locals used fire for grass renewal  
“ trusty Land Rovers ! ”  
Lunch every day – whites ate before helpers – careful not to each too much
- **New Caledonia** [ French Protectorate ] – there working for Inco  
Snorkelling every Sunday in the Coral Sea
- **Pender Islands** in middle of the ocean – “Gulf Islands”

#### **MEMBER COMMENTS**

The level of interest & enjoyment was evidenced by the numerous comments from Members following the Presentation:

Mike M. “ pictures are fantastic” \ “wonderful work travels”

Wayne C. ... “one hell of a career”

Q. Impact of climate change. A. “ in Collingwood the ice was a mile thick at one period of time

Jim was warmly thanked and presently “visually” with a George Christie pencil set.

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**APRIL SHOWERS – MAY FLOWERS!**

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Note: Any opinions expressed herein are solely those of the newsletter editor unless otherwise specifically indicated \ source attributed. Errors are the responsibility of the editor. Feedback \ Suggestions are most welcome ►► [gord@halllaw.com](mailto:gord@halllaw.com).

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## REPRINT FROM APRIL 24, 2021 ISSUE OF BARRIE TODAY

***THEY CALL HIM MR. TRAILS:*** Collingwood man's vision (and handsaw) carved path for trail network

*Not a week goes by without George Christie doing some work for Collingwood's network of pedestrian and snowmobile trails, a system he helped create*

*Equipped with a handsaw and armed with charismatic charm used to recruit help for the cause, coupled with a knack for scavenging old lumber, George Christie has blazed several trails in Collingwood.*

*When Christie returned to his hometown to retire in the 1990s, Collingwood trails were squiggly lines on a map leading nowhere.*

*It took the work of community volunteers and staff to turn the trail map that looked like "worms on a plate" into a connected network of more than 60 kilometres of pedestrian trails.*

*For the last 30 years, Christie has been one of the leaders among those volunteers, working hands-on to carve out trails, maintain them, and dream up new ones.*

*"He's called Mr. Trails, and there's no question about it," said Jack Marley, a member of the town's trails and active transportation committee and one of several dozens of volunteers recruited by Christie.*

*Marley met Christie through the Probus Club and has since become part of a core group of volunteers who have done everything from clearing fallen logs and trimming back growth from the sides of the trails, to building boardwalks from lumber they recycled from other town projects.*

*"He's a little cherub," Marley said of Christie. "Everyone likes him... people get friendly and the next thing you know he calls you to help with a job. Now he has this list of workers. But people like doing it. They like doing it for him."*

*Christie was born in Collingwood. He attended Collingwood Collegiate Institute and King George School. He moved away to pursue his career as a stock broker, but moved back to town full-time in the early 1990s.*

*After he was encouraged by his doctor to retire, he bought a home in Collingwood to start his retirement work.*

*As an avid snowmobiler, he was frustrated to find there were no trails he could take from his home in town to the trails on the mountain.*

*And so began his work toward forging a trail system in Collingwood.*

*“One thing led to another,” said Christie. “We got a lot done by begging forgiveness instead of asking permission.”*

*Christie was joined in the early days by Rad Whitehead and Sonny Foley, and the three worked together to create trails and concoct plans to connect the ones that existed already.*

*At town hall, Peter Dunbar was the senior staffer in charge of trails when Christie first returned to Collingwood. Dunbar said Christie reached out almost immediately after moving back to Collingwood to say he wanted to help build a trail network.*

*“George was one of the five or six community members who kept on pushing the edge for council to give more money to parks and recreation,” recalled Dunbar of the decades in the early 1990s working with Christie.*

*It was “integral” work at the time, according to Dunbar, since there used to be resistance to adding pedestrian trails in new developments.*

*“George was aggressively chasing down all the little connections he could help with,” said Dunbar. “What he did for me in the community was he was that solid engagement with the public. He organized members of the public to phone their council members and ask for a trail in their area.”*

*Christie and other volunteers started creating trail maps once every two years, and getting advertisers to support the printing costs.*

*“People started getting jealous if they didn’t have a trail in their segment of the town, and that was important to help flush out trail supporters,” said Dunbar.*

*Christie still builds most of the map boxes at the 125 locations around the Collingwood area where trail maps are kept. He’s assisted by a team of volunteers who helps keep the boxes stocked. Others act as trail ambassadors, visiting a portion of the trail once a week or more to make sure it’s in good shape, and cleaning up when they have to.*

*“I so appreciate the volunteers for doing the jobs they do,” said Christie, himself a trail ambassador prone to collecting bags of dog poop he calls “land mines” from the sides of the trail and branches of trees.*

*He also always carries a saw in case he spots a downed branch while out on his e-bike.*

*“He’s a little dangerous to get behind because he’ll stop without warning,” said Marley. “It might be because he spotted a lady slipper, or because he found a branch that needs cutting.”*

*On a hike of the George Christie Nature Trails, Christie interrupted an interview several times to point out a toad or a snake, or to show off the latest work of the trails committee to install a culvert or widen the path.*

*The Seatbelt Trail, explained Christie as he walked by the sign marking the side trail, was named for the seatbelt discovered in a tree when volunteers were clearing the path. The seatbelt is still there, though few but Christie can point it out.*

*“He knows every inch, every blade of grass, every town operator,” said Marley.*

*His passion, dedication, and persistence is still appreciated by the town staff in charge of trails.*

*The current manager of parks for the town, Wendy Martin, is a Mr. Trails fan.*

*“We wouldn’t have anywhere near the trails network we have now without George,” said Martin.*

*She said it’s because of his work and that of other volunteers like him that trails have increased enough in popularity and demand that the town mandates developers to install trails in new build areas.*

*“He’s a fantastic person, very valuable,” said Martin.*

*More people than Martin claim the trail system wouldn’t be what it is today without Christie.*

*“Well, that’s not far from the truth,” is all Christie will admit. “Certainly not a week goes by that I don’t have some trail activity in one way or another.”*

*He wants to see upgrades to the existing network, widening trails and more maintenance to keep them in pristine condition.*

*“It’s a real gem for the town,” said Christie, adding he knows of at least two doctors who moved to the area and set up practice in Collingwood, drawn in part because of the trails network.*

*“It certainly has been a great asset for the town.”*

*Christie, however proud he is of the trails now, keeps on dreaming.*

*“He’s always got a vision of something new,” said Marley. “He’s not ever going to rest.”*

*He wants to see an off-highway connection to Wasaga Beach, a safe bike path from Collingwood to Blue Mountain, and maybe one day a little ferry to take pedestrians from Hens and Chickens Island to the Collingwood harbour.*

*Christie continues to advocate for all new subdivisions to be required to link to the current trail system.*

*And in the meantime he keeps building map boxes and travelling the trails on his e-bike with his saw close at hand.*

*“I guess I enjoy it or I wouldn’t be doing it,” said Christie. “I know people enjoy using the trails. Collingwood has become famous for its trail network. Is that an incentive? I hope so. It’s just a good thing to do.”*

*Doing good things is a Christie family tradition, according to Dunbar, who continues to keep in regular contact with George.*

*“The Christies have always had some involvement in the community in a positive manner,” said Dunbar. “They’re really sort of like model citizens.”*

*A series of nature trails was named the George Christie Nature Trails in honour of Christie’s work to get the town’s trail network to where it is today. He’s also been made an honorary member of the Trails and Active Transportation Committee after he maxed out on the number of allowable terms. He attends every meeting.*