

The Ontario Masters Track and Field Association (OMTFA) was created by the Canadian Masters Athletic Association (CMAA) in 1973 but there was considerable Masters activity in Ontario before the creation of OMTFA.

Don Farquharson has left us an outline of that activity, and the CMAA origins. A condensed version of Don's work is presented below.

To understand why and how something came into being, it is essential to look back to its ancestors. In this respect, the beginnings of the Masters movement in Canada were humble. On July 1st, 1964, an Annual Dominion Day fitness test series was inaugurated by North York Township, Ontario, at Northview Collegiate. These tests involved some chin-ups, some sit-ups and the completion of a mile run in a modest time, and they were conducted in age groups, the oldest of which was 35 years and over. It should be recalled that at this time, although Bruce Kidd and Bill Crothers had put Canada on the World Map athletically, the older athlete who ran for health and fun was a rare bird and regarded as being rather peculiar. Those very few who still competed after age 35 were an outright curiosity, and a run around the streets or even a park occasioned everything from derision to flying beer canisters. This being so, no one knew what to expect when the fifteen or so contestants lined up for the mile race before about 500 onlookers. Most of them were left in shock when Gordon Carton, later Minister of Labour in the Ontario Government, ran what then seemed a lightning first lap of 70 seconds. The fact that he slowed to much gentler speeds and finished over the 6 minute mark was lost on his fellow runners who finished far behind. Fortunately, the names and addresses of this over-35 group were secured by Tsai Mah. "Sy" sent out letters to the group suggesting that they should meet to run regularly and the Metro Toronto Fitness Club was born. MTFC, as this club became known, featured Club training runs weekly and a monthly time trial, usually of one or two miles distance. Contacting a like-minded American club from Baltimore in 1965, a series of home and away two mile road races were arranged between them. This was the first North American competition for Masters, although this name had yet to be born.

Shortly after this, Don Farquharson became President of the club and over-40's competition became a regular feature of the Toronto track & field scene. A great impetus was provided to the movement when an "Old Timers" handicap Mile was included in the 1967 Maple Leaf Indoor Games - the event was included in this prestigious meet for a number of years. Subsequent winners were Jack Webb, Don Farquharson, John Reeves and Jack Grey. Despite this activity, little was yet known of developments elsewhere in Canada and still less elsewhere in the world, but this was shortly to end. John Reeves pioneered Canadian entries to the newly formed United States Masters Championships and then in 1971 Reeves, who had established himself as the leading Canadian middle distance runner over age 40, brought news of a United States Masters tour to the first International Masters (Veterans) events to be held in England, Finland, Sweden and Germany during 1972. A small group of MTFC members decided to take part but when contact was made with the British organizers, they informed us that Canadians from Alberta and British Columbia had also shown interest. Don Farquharson wrote to Vic Stephens of Courtenay, B.C. and Bill Wyllie of Calgary, suggesting the formation of a Canadian team to take part in these events.

On February 5th, the first General Meeting took place in Laurier H.S. in Scarborough, and the Canadian Masters International Track Team was formed with Farquharson as President, Stephens as Vice-President, Ted Clark of Scarborough, Ont. as Secretary, and Max Bacon (Toronto) and Bill Wyllie as Directors. There were 30 registered members, but as the date for the tour came closer more flocked in, and eventually 41 competitors plus a number of wives travelled on the first international tour. Enough enthusiasm was generated during the tour that the C.M.I.T.T. made plan to expand and forge ahead strongly. This came about quickly. David Pain of the U.S.M.I.T.T. and Farquharson approached the Canadian National Exhibition with plans to organize the first World Championships for Masters to be held after the Montreal Olympics in 1976. The CNE agreed but opted for August of 1975, and the C.M.I.T.T. authorized the formation of the "First World Masters Track & Field

Championships 1975 Committee" to carry out this considerable task.

In 1975 came the first World Championships. Space does not permit justice to be done to this mammoth effort at which 1,400 competitors from 34 countries took part in the week-long competition. The Canadian committee was headed by Don Farquharson (Pres.) and Elwyn Davies (V.-Pres.). Difficulties were many, but everyone came through triumphantly in the end. Historically this Championship will not only be remembered as the first, but also that on Thursday, August 14th, an open meeting was held at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, at which a special committee was elected to study the feasibility of the formation of the World Association of Veteran Athletes. Two Canadians, Don Farquharson and Ian Hume, were elected to this Committee. When the windup of this First World Championship was complete, the 1976 Executive set about launching the Association to greater heights. Many new members had become a part of C.M.I.T.T. as a result of the publicity of the Championships and we had also continued in residence at Sport Ontario (an office which was made available during the big meet). We were able to benefit from the advantages it offered. On the other hand, many of the Executive were tired after the big year and anxious to lay down their responsibilities. To some extent there was a "blue" aftermath. Don Farquharson, however, continued in the presidency, supported by Brian Oxley and the standards of the C.M.I.T.T. Bulletin, published monthly since inception, were substantially improved and enlarged.

In 1977, Farquharson relinquished the Presidency after 5 years, and Brian Oxley took over the helm, with Alastair Lynn as V-P. Finances needed attention after so much effort had been spent on the World Meet, and Oxley chose Dick Dear (his father-in-law) as the new Treasurer. Dick's three years in this position have proved the wisdom of this choice. His integrity and painstaking efforts have improved the financial position dramatically. At the second World Championships, Gothenburg (Sweden), a sizeable Canadian contingent took part with success, especially our Pole Vaulters, who won in several different divisions. Don Farquharson was elected the first President of the newly founded World Association of Veterans Athletes. Norman Baum joined the Executive the following year. Norman introduced new Bulletin standards, especially in technical and descriptive writing areas. Brian Oxley had the C.M.I.T.T. moving in the right direction again. Alastair Lynn was elected President in 1979, whilst Brian Oxley continued to serve as Past President and Don Farquharson as International representative. The Second North American Championships were hosted in Scarborough, the successful meet being masterminded by Oxley. Ken Richardson of B.C., the new Vice-President, was making great strides in the West and was also successful in assisting a large number of Canadians to travel to the third World Championships, which were held in Hannover, Germany, with over 3,000 competitors. Canadian Masters again won a large number of awards. This year of 1980 has seen Alastair Lynn continuing in the Presidency with a style distinctly his own. He has introduced much efficiency, pioneered a French translation to the President's Message, has successfully arranged the adoption of a Constitution, considerably increased the participation of Women Masters in Canada, spearheaded to move to change our name to the more suitable "Canadian Masters Athletic Association" and, in preparing to lay down his mantle, has broken new ground in arranging that the 1981 Annual Meeting will be held in B.C., thus presumably heralding a new era in C.M.A.A. history with a movement of control westwards. During all this time he has, nevertheless, competed most enthusiastically. In time, his most successful endeavour may be in establishing a closer connection with the C.T.F.A. It was the first time all members of the Canadian Executive and Provincial Directors had met together at one time. The results were exciting and inspirational.

Jim Pascoe outlines the history of the Ontario Masters Track & Field Association:

In Don's history above, there is no mention of the creation of OMTFA in 1973. In the beginning, it

was little more than an organization on paper. The CMITT had appointed Sean McQuillan as the Ontario representative and he served from 1973 until 1976. In 1976 John Young became the Ontario Provincial Director when the CMITT set up a steering committee to look the future for Ontario. In October 1976 the committee: John Young, George Pattison, and Keith Kerr, met with Don Farquharson (Pres.), Brian Oxley (V-P), and Alastair Lynn (Sect.), of CMITT, in Woodbridge, Ontario. They looked at creating districts within Ontario at Ottawa, Oshawa, Toronto, Kitchener, North Bay, London, and Hamilton, and to appoint representative in those areas. For example, George Gluppe, in Toronto and Whitey Sheridan in Hamilton. This idea did not materialize and it was decided on one Ontario with one director.

The year 1976 was a busy time in Ontario - but not about Ontario. There was a lot of activity in Toronto. The first World Masters Championships had recently finished. Plans were underway for the creation of World Masters organization and there a National body to be organized. Throughout this period, starting with plans for the World Championships, CMITT had occupied an office at Sport Ontario and had worked closely with Ontario Track and Field during the planning of the world championship. Now, with more work to be done, the Ontario office was a essential and it was no surprise that the Masters in Ontario voted to stay affiliated with Ontario Track and Field. At the time of OMTFA's creation there appears to have been a plan to ensure that the organization never obtained any degree of autonomy.

For the next ten years the OMTFA Board operations were mostly obscured by the glare of the CMAA operation in Ontario. An OMTFA constitution had been drawn up that set out the organization's structure, objectives, size of the executive, and the executive's responsibilities. Provincial responsibilities included promoting masters athletics in Ontario, organizing a number of events each year, and producing a newsletter. The Ontario constitution specified that CMAA would set membership fees, and that all new members had to be approved by CMAA, The CMAA constitution (1980 edition) states that one role of the province is "To obtain funds from Provincial Governments and quasi-Government corporations such as Wintario and from these types of funds to finance CMAA in relation to the number of their certified members on the date of the CMAA Annual General Meeting." The OMTFA constitution, under the heading FINANCIAL stated, in part "...This budget will be presented to the Ontario Government to support the application for a grant." These elements of the respective constitutions suggest that the CMAA intended to keep Ontario on a very short leash and in essence was saying, "... what is yours is mine, but what is mine is my own."

The OMTFA constitution also called for the election of officers, but in the early years the Ontario officers were appointed by CMAA including: Sean McQuillan, 1973; John Young, 1976; Keith Kerr, 1978; and Sajjad Butt, 1979. Most, if not all, these members also served on the CMAA Board before and after their respective terms as OMTFA President. Both the CMAA and OMTFA were required, by their constitutions, to organize a number of events each year and it was frequently the case that in Ontario there would be more CMAA events than OMTFA events. By 1980 the CMAA had four events permanently in Ontario: Women's 5k Road Race; Inter-club track championship; a Pentathlon; and Cross-country relay. When you add to these the Outdoor Track, and road races, marathon and ten-kilometres it was possible to have six or seven CMAA events in Ontario. The OMTFA had four events, Indoor and Outdoor track, plus a ten-kilometre cross race and a pentathlon. Masters in Ontario were not complaining - they were loving it and doing the work. Christine Walker directed the Women's 5k; Torval Jackson the CMAA Pentathlon, Jim Breslin and Jim Flowers doing the OMTFA Pentathlon. On the Track there was Art Rappich and Don Farquharson doing the Ontario Indoor Championships. Don worked tirelessly all across the country but was most effective in Ontario. He was involved in everything and promoted masters with enthusiasm, but it was CMAA masters he was promoting and he was so effective that every member in Ontario considered themselves CMAA members first and only.

In 1981 there was a glimmer of hope that OMTFA was coming out of the shadows when Art Rappich, was elected President of OMTFA, the very first Ontario election. Art was a member of Metro Toronto Fitness Club and certainly knew well Don, Brian Oxley, and Alastair Lynn but any effort to increase the profile of the OMTFA was nullified by a political controversy centered in Ontario. The Canadian Government, as part of its foreign policy, announced that any Canadian athlete competing against South African athletes would be denied government funding. This was a protest against the South African policy of apartheid. It happened that WAVA was planning the 1983 World Championship for Puerto Rico. South Africa was invited and some Canadian Masters planned to attend. The issue was that “if Canadian Masters attended the WAVA Championships there was a possibility that CMAA would lose Federal funding, OMTFA would lose Provincial funding and individuals would be prevented from competing in Canada.” At this time Don Farquharson was President of WAVA and a member of the CMAA Board. So we had WAVA and CMAA opposing Canadian foreign policy. Alastair Lynn, representing CMAA, tried to persuade Canada to exempt Masters from the policy when he met with representatives of Sport Canada, and Canadian Track and Field, in Ottawa. Alastair was partially successful. Provincial funds (Ontario) would not be affected if CMAA had gone to Puerto Rico. In addition, he received funding of \$9,500.00 to arrange a National Conference in Toronto and a “full-page spread” in Athletics. The National Conference, held in Toronto, agreed to send a team to Puerto Rico. CMAA lost its federal funding, and OMTFA was lost in all the excitement. Don summed it up in his history of CMAA. “It was the first time all members of the Canadian Executive and Provincial Directors had met together at one time. The results were exciting and inspirational.”

The attitude of most Ontario members toward the CMAA and OMTFA in the early eighties is typified in Jim McIlwham of eastern Ontario. Jim lived in the area of Cobourg and at age 50 was running 35 minute for 10K on the road. It appears Jim was running a race every week and he submitted a race report and results from every race he entered, to the CMAA publication, the MASTERpiece, not to the Ontario Masters newsletter. When he wanted to complain about Ontario race directors not having adequate age-groups in their races, Jim sent his complaint to the CMAA, not OMTFA. It appears that Jim considered the OMTFA to be of little consequence in the province, if he considered it at all. The Ontario operations began to change in 1985 and a number of people were involved but the principals were Ross Cruickshank, Jim Pascoe, Brian Keaveney, and Mike Freeman. In June that year, Ross Cruickshank was elected President of OMTFA. Ross was a retired school-teacher, from Cambridge, who had served a few years on the OMTFA Board before being elected President. At age seventy Ross was still running twenty-five minutes for the 5K.

In October 1985 Jim Pascoe was elected Vice-President of CMAA. Jim joined the organization about 1981 after a chance meeting with an old friend at the indoor track at York University. The old friend, Johnny Johnston, and Jim had been team-mates with North Belfast Harriers in the 1956 and it was Johnny that informed Jim about CMAA. By 1984 Jim, along with John vander Vleuten, Adri Heimstra, and Doreen Carmichael, started the Scarborough Masters Track Club. It was as a representative of Scarborough Masters that Jim Pascoe was complaining about the masters organization in Ontario, that Christine Walker, herself a member of the CMAA Board, suggested that if he wanted to fix things then he should join the Board, meaning the CMAA Board, and that is what Jim did. Ross Cruickshank as OMTFA President attended the CMAA meetings and began to talk about plans for promoting OMTFA and masters generally within Ontario. Jim Pascoe was impressed by Ross’ ideas and enthusiasm and decided to join Ross, in the future, in the OMTFA. At one particular meeting, Ross mentioned having met a young fellow, of masters age, at a high-school event and was so taken by his enthusiasm that Ross planned to recruit him into the OMTFA. The young fellow was Brian Keaveney, and Ross was successful in the recruitment. In 1985 Brian Keaveney joined CMAA. Brian had a few marathons under belt with a best time of 3:15 and a 10K best of about forty-minutes. He had coached high-school track, and cross-country. In addition, he was an official Starter. Brian quickly joined the OMTFA Board. By the time Brian joined the OMTFA, the planning for the Ontario Indoor Championships was well under way with Ken Twigg,

Art Rappich, and Don Farquharson sharing the Directorship. Brian got involved with the Ontario Outdoor in June that year when it was held at East York Collegiate. Then in the new year, one of the first things that Ross and Brian did was to organize an “Officiating Seminar” at Variety Village. That was March 1986. Fourteen members attended. Hans Warwas co-ordinated the seminar. Brian spoke about duties at the start-line, starter, clerk, starter’s assistant, and recall-starter. Lloyd Wickett covered the finish-line especially the timers. Bruce Burton covered the throws and Hans Warwas covered the jumps. A week later, Brian was Director of the Ontario Indoor at York and followed that by directing the Ontario Outdoor in Etobicoke in June 1986. At the Ontario AGM in Etobicoke, Brian Keaveney moved to the position of Vice-president of Ontario Masters. A few months later it was announced that in the future there would be a “non-member” fee charged to those competitors in Ontario Masters events who were not members of the CMAA.

In October 1986 Jim Pascoe stepped down from the CMAA VP position with the intent of joining the OMTFA board the following June. He saw a conflict-of-interest in trying to sit on both boards. Ross Cruickshank had no such compunction. He moved into the VP position on the CMAA board to become the President of the Ontario Masters and the Vice President of the Canadian Masters. So Ross Cruickshank and Jim Pascoe may have had similar views for the Ontario profile but obviously saw the Ontario Masters in differing roles. Jim saw a union of two autonomous entities but Ross was looking for something less. All the plans suffered a bit of a setback late in 1986 when Ross died suddenly after a work-out at York. Mike Freeman noted “...he will be sadly missed personally and professionally.

Fortunately for the future of the OMTFA, Brian Keaveney, vice-president, stepped into Ross’ rather large shoes and will do his best to carry on with the many projects that Ross had initiated.” Mike Freeman was an enthusiastic supporter of the Ontario Masters and the direction taken by Ross Cruickshank. Mike started out as a marathoner with some impressive times in the 2:45 region but injuries forced to change sports and he ended up as a racewalker. He joined CMAA in the late nineteen-seventies and took over the job of Ontario Newsletter Editor about 1980. Mike, like Jim Pascoe, was impressed with the Ross Cruickshank’s plans and with the work of Brian Keaveney. As the Editor of the newsletter, Mike, in his editorials, “Rimes of the Ancient Marathoner” praised and promoted the work of both Ross and Brian.

A few years earlier, Jim Pascoe praised Mike’s work. In an incident at the Ontario Masters cross-country championship, held at Earl Bales Park in November 1984, people got upset when the race Director refused entries on the day. The entry form clearly stated “no entries on the day”. In the Ontario Newsletter, after the race, Mike Freeman in his editorial supported the Director and went on to criticize those who tried to enter ad hoc teams. Mike ended with “... we are trying to run a class event, with efficient organization.” Jim Pascoe urged the Scarborough Masters Club to send a letter to Mike supporting his stand, and a few years later Jim did put a stop to ad hoc teams at Ontario Masters events. In 1987 Ontario Masters created the Ross Cruickshank Memorial trophy to be presented to the male or female with the best individual performance in the Ontario championships. In that first year Max Woerle won the trophy for an M55 hammer throw of 39.32m. Brian made a number of other announcements: Ontario Masters are interested in moving the Outdoor championships around the Province and asked for bids; Ontario was looking for a new championship medal design; and they were looking for a provincial marathon championship. Also in June 1987 Jim Pascoe joined the OMTFA Board. He urged Brian to go after CMAA for control of the Wintario funds. The Wintario funds were supplied by the Ontario government to OMTFA to be used as travel expenses by the organization, but CMAA was controlling those funds. In 1983 Alastair Lynn explained the situation in an article published in MASTERpiece. “... support from Wintario for Ontario based members of CMAA has been quite good in the past, particularly... in going to World championships.” Alastair then lists the rules for applicants and finishes with “... These rules are more closely defined than hitherto; however, goodwill between Wintario and the CMAA negotiating

committee of Don Farquharson, Ross Cruickshank (VP Ontario), and myself has made them more generous than at first planned.” Many Ontario members benefitting from the funds but considered them as coming from CMAA coffers. Jim Pascoe argued that if they are Ontario funds Ontario Masters alone should be the administrators.

(see note below regarding Wintario funding)

Brian Keaveney and Jim Pascoe held a number of meetings with CMAA throughout 1987 and were successful in getting control of Wintario funds in March 1988. The whole of 1988 went very well. Brian, of course, Meet Director for the Indoors, and the Outdoors. At the indoor championship he introduced seeded sections for the 200m and 400m within age groups. The racewalkers were out in force and for the first time in the history of the event there were two sections in an Ontario Masters indoor walking race. George Paterson set a Canadian Open record for M75 with 21:47 and picked-up the Arnold Ticmanis trophy for the best meet performance by an athlete over 70. In the following section Jaan Roos set a World record M50, with 14:11. The Outdoors, in Centennial Stadium, Etobicoke, saw a number of Canadian records. Emily Milgram with a record in W35 100m, 12.9. Cliff Hall set two Canadian records in M60; 800m, 2:22.3; and 1500m, 4:53.8. Jean Horne W55, also did the 800m, 1500m record double, with 2:50.6 and 5:41.8. In July 1988 Jim Breslin organized the Ontario pentathlon and the Ontario weight pentathlon together, at Birchmount Stadium. The prominent feature was the large turnout of women, five in the pentathlon and three in the weight pentathlon.

In June 1989 the Ontario Outdoor was held in Sudbury with Shirley Pommier as meet director. There was only one dark spot in the whole week-end - someone stole Brian's van from outside the hotel. It contained some of his belongings and some paperwork relative to Ontario Masters. Brian recovered sufficiently to carry on with the AGM, at which he stepped down as Ontario President, as his term of office was up. At the AGM Jim Pascoe took on the job as President. A part of the AGM agenda was to make changes to the Ontario constitution. The changes were relatively minor. A section was removed that required Ontario to submit its financial report to the Ontario Government, and an item was added that specified that CMAA would issue membership cards to members. For the first time ever at an Ontario AGM the status and nature of Wintario funds was explained and discussed. With Brian's administrative duties reduced he was able to donate more time to organizing events and he willingly did that, Ontario masters were the benefactors of his time and effort. Before the year was out Brian announced that he would conduct a seminar for potential meet directors in Variety Village, possibly in January 1990.

Over the next two years Jim Pascoe initiated a few changes but one of the first things on the agenda was to get a rebate from CMAA based on a percentage of membership fees. While the executive was discussing the issue, Don Farquharson reported the discussions to CMAA and they in turn tried to “nip-it-in-the-bud” so to speak. OMTFA received a letter explaining they were wasting their time. The CMAA had no extra funds. There was no excess in the budget that included producing and mailing the MASTERpiece, and that cost keeps going up, Liability Insurance, and Team Manager fees. The CMAA went on to explain that OMTFA already gets a rebate but after it pays its portion of shared expenses the net is a zero transfer. Some on the CMAA Board expressed the opinion that the OMTFA was simply greedy and expressed the concern that Ontario “... may be trying to go it alone.” It was also suggested that the general membership should be informed about Ontario's recklessness. In the end a rebate of \$2.00 per member was accepted by both sides. On a different issue, a Club Registry was set up in Ontario. This was the solution to the ad hoc team problem which affected cross country events.

Over the previous six years the Ontario Masters had worked closely with Metro Toronto Road Running Association (MTRRA). Their directors Bob Moore, Ron Flint and Bert deVries had worked

to put on the Ontario cross country 10K race, first in Earl Bales and later in Sunnybrook Park. In 1984 there was a problem with ad hoc teams and the problem returned in 1987. In that year, an ad hoc team of women beat out the Scarborough Masters women's team and Scarborough lodged a protest. The race director disqualified the ad hoc team. The club registry was introduced to combat the ad hoc teams with a corresponding rule: "No team may enter an Ontario Masters race unless it is part of a club team and the club must be registered with Ontario Masters." This at least prevented people jumping for one team to another in any given year. So if you started a season on a team associated with a particular club you could not compete with any other club team that season. In addition, it was hoped, there would be a closer relationship between Ontario Masters and Ontario clubs. Another feature that was added was a series of All-comers meets in Variety Village. Mike Freeman and Brian Keaveney would not be available so Jim Pascoe took on the job of meet director and he recruited Scarborough Masters for officials. The first meet, 17 December 1989, had six events: 60m, 200m, 3000m, 2K walk, Long Jump, and Shot put. The total entry was 25 including people from Scarborough Masters, Masters Sprint Club, and Etobicoke Huskies. Everyone enjoyed the meet and wanted more so a 4X200m relay was added on the spot. The second meet, 7 January 1990, had: 60m, 400m, mile, 2k walk, high jump, and shot, and a total of 38 entries. The milers included George Aitkin, John Weston, Murray Mostyn, and Ron Crichton. Both meets went well so a third meet was added on 11 February 1990. The events were 60m, 200m, 800m, 3000m, 2k walk, long jump, and high jump, with a total entry of 60 that included Kerry Smith, Stuart Summerhayes, Tim Payne, Jim McIlwham and Norm Baum. All three events went well and showed that Ontario Masters all-comers could work, although Variety Village may not be the best facility because "spikes" were not permitted. That put the sprinters off. These particular meets lost money - but making money was not the objective. Three more meets were planned for 1991 and these too went very well. The all-comers concept was accepted. The name was later changed to the Ontario Masters Winter Mini Meets.

Early in 1990 an organization called the Canada MasterAthlete Games emerged in Ontario and their immediate plan was to hold their games in Ontario. The people pushing this organization were associated with swimming and had been working with the World Masters Games that ran in Ontario in 1985. The 1985 World Masters Games conflicted with the WAVA championship set for Rome that year. Consequently, CMAA refused to get involved in the Toronto event. CMAA went as far as to urge the membership to avoid the games. In the end, the Etobicoke Huskies organized the World Masters Games cross-country and the track and field and many Ontario Masters had a great time. In the following year, 1986, the Toronto papers were filled with stories of possible corruption and fraud within the Masters Games organization. So when Canada MasterAthlete Games approached CMAA they refused to get involve but suggested that Ontario Masters may be interested. Jim Pascoe, Brian Keaveney, and Don Farquharson had a series of meetings with the group and the main objective was to try and determine the legitimacy of the group. One thing that was certain was they had plenty of money. In the end Ontario agreed to support the games and Brian agreed to be Meet Director.

It was a busy year. Brian did the Ontario Indoor in March, George Gluppe did the Outdoor in Etobicoke in early June, Brian did the MasterAthlete Games at York at the end of June, and the Canadian Outdoor was in Montreal. The MasterAthlete Games was a great meet, about 200 entries, smaller than expected, but afterward there was not even a hint of scandal. Ontario Masters did get some "air time". Ben Mackereth was interviewed on CBC radio and talked enthusiastically about the games in general and about the merits of OMTFA. He predicted that he would win three medals. A week later, Ben was on the show again to confirm that he won his three medals. At the end of 1990 an Ontario Masters Rankings was introduced. The ranking was an age-graded rank limited to Ontario Masters and included the 200m, 800m, and 5000m for 1989. The numbers ranked were 49, 56, and 91 respectively. There was a similar ranking for 1990. In May 1991 Brian Keaveney received an Ontario Sports Special Achievement Award for his contribution to Ontario amateur sport. The 1991 Ontario Outdoor was set for Oshawa with Oliver Sinclair as meet director with help from Durham

Road Runners. At the AGM in Oshawa, Jim Pascoe stepped down and Don Hamilton took on the President's job. Among the new executive was Doug Smith who would eventually take over as newsletter editor and re-design the publication giving it a more appealing appearance.

The First Meeting.

The Association was founded at a meeting in Woodbridge on October 17th, 1976

John Young was the CMITT (Canadian Masters International Track Team) provincial director at the time. George Pattison and Keith Kerr were members of a Steering Committee. Those in attendance were Don Farquharson (CMITT President), Brian Oxley (CMITT VP), Alastair Lynn (CMITT Secretary).

Initially, they wanted to have Provincial District Directors; Ottawa, Oshawa, Toronto (George Gluppe), Kitchener, London, North Bay, Hamilton (Whitey).

They considered the results of a poll that indicated the Ontario membership was strongly in favour of an affiliation with the Ontario Track & Field Association – that continues to this day.

Keith Kerr was in attendance at the initial meeting, in 1976, remembers:

The Ontario Masters Organization came into being on a beautiful October day in 1976, following a CMAA Cross-Country race in Boyd Park, in North-West Toronto. A large number of the race competitors were in attendance at the founding meeting, which was held in a small Park building at Boyd Conservation Area. Ontario Masters was created as an extension of CMAA in order to obtain access to funding by Sport Ontario. The CMAA was not eligible for Provincial funding as it was a National Body.

CMAA appointed John to head up the Founding Committee, and Yours Truly had the honour of being the first elected President of Ontario Masters. My most vivid memory of those early days is not, as you might expect, the planning, promoting and running race meets, but rather the inordinate amount of bureaucratic red tape involved in gaining access to Provincial funding. Once we had overcome this hurdle, this aspect of the position became less burdensome because we now knew the ropes. Funding applications became more routine and the Committee was able to dwell on its "Raison D'Etre" which was the promotion of health through athletics for "mature" men and women residents of Ontario. In 1979, my employer transferred me to Chicago, which took me away from the Ontario running scene. Nevertheless, I managed to maintain contact with several members of Ontario Masters and was most gratified to see the Organization continue to grow, and to expand its mandate through increased membership, and a broadened events calendar, and become the viable entity it is today.

Mike Freeman was the Newsletter Editor for many years. Mike writes:

The first issue of the Ontario Masters Newsletter was published, under the title of "Rimes of the Ancient Marathoner" in the summer of 1981. You are reading the 100th version. I had the privilege of editing that original issue, and most of the 42 that followed, up to July of 1992 when Doug Smith took over the task. Meanwhile the hardworking OMTFA executive, led by Art Rappich, was dealing with the practical issues of the day. A submasters division (35-39) in our cross country championships was established as part of a broad-based programme to encourage membership growth. Christine Walker established an annual Masters Women 5K road race held successfully in Sunnybrook Park for several years. Standard badges were proposed at three levels to recognize Masters' individual achievements, but this proved an expensive and complex proposition. Club profiles were published occasionally in the newsletter to let members know they were not in this sport on their own. In the summer of 1983 the OMTFA championships were held in a northern venue for the first time. Under Shirley Pommier's able direction a successful meet was held at Laurentian University in Sudbury with some 120 competitors. And finally in 1984 the executive voted to expand the age categories for males to include an M70 and an M75+ division. The oldest women's age category remained at W50+ for some time to come. On the auspicious occasion of the 100th edition of the Ontario Newsletter (April 2008), I thought it might be interesting to look back at the major concerns of Ontario Masters at that distant time, and how they have evolved over the past 27 years.

My “personal crusades” as outlined in that first idealistic, perhaps naïve, editorial included the following:

“Greater recognition by the media of Masters achievements” Hmm. Except for the human interest stories on Ed Whitlock’s unprecedented achievements, and the occasional mention of Earl Fee as athlete and author, I have not seen much progress in convincing the mainstream media that our accomplishments are worth noting.

“More participation by Masters women” This may be one area where we have had significant success. Looking at the increasing number of women finishers in road race results from across North America, and, within the microcosm of my own experience, the growth in numbers and participation among women racewalkers in Ontario, the balance seems to have shifted from viewing women’s events as a novelty to welcoming them as equal and valuable partners in the sport.

“Expanded categories of Masters awards in road races” Another winner. From my subjective reading of newsletters it seems that the majority of events now differentiate between the 42 year old club runner who never really retired from open competition and the 72 year old competitor who may have only taken up the sport once again after a long hiatus, but still craves and deserves recognition of her new accomplishments.

“Abolition of OTFA membership requirements for entry into open track and field meets” Peace at last. It’s been several decades since I was tempted to compete in an open event, but it’s nice to know that I could, without paying what seemed at the time an exorbitant fee, for seemingly very few practical benefits.

“For a cautious approach to the awarding of monetary prizes in road racing events” Anyone who has observed groups of Kenyans making their annual migration into North America to make their living sweeping up the now substantial “monetary prizes” in road races throughout the U.S. and Canada will realize that caution has been thrown to the winds, to be lost forever, along with the perhaps outdated, but still mourned, concept of amateur sport. Well that’s what I think anyway. And as I was careful to conclude in that very first editorial, the “opinions are those of the newsletter editor alone, and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the Ontario Masters.”

Doug Smith - I joined the OMTFA Executive in June of 1991, and took over as Editor for Newsletter #44 in July 1992. The 100th issue was published in the Spring of 2008. I first came upon the Masters in the Fall of 1988. I was running my fastest times that year – 35:52 in the 10K and 16:38 to win Sport Aid 88. I was always looking for a race, and I went up to the Sunnybrook Pavilion one Sunday to post enter one that was listed in the paper. There was no one around except this older fellow, who was warming up. He didn’t know anything about a road race, but said that they were having a Metro Fitness race and that I would be welcome. That was Ben Mackereth – a very well-known Masters sprinter. He told me that there were a couple of masters races coming up, which I ran – the CMAA Relay (which became Don’s Relay) and my first OMTFA Sunnybrook 8K. I was hooked. I ran my first track meet at the Indoor Championships the next Spring, running the 800m in 2:22 and the 1500m in 4:36, chasing George Aitkin and Tim Payne. I’ve never run those distances any faster! Later that day I ran the 5000m in 18:02. Now, besides cross country, I was hooked on Masters track.

Two years later, I attended the OMTFA Outdoor Championships in Oshawa in 1991. I took the Go Train to the meet, so I stayed on Saturday, after the first day’s events, to attend the AGM, looking to mooch a ride home. When they asked for nominations from the floor, Ann Marie Rosenitsch, who was sitting next to me, piped up “What about this guy!”. I stammered some lame excuse, that didn’t convince them of my incompetence, so I was on the Board. The next year, in 1992, besides becoming Vice President, I took over from Mike as the Newsletter Editor. My job at Bell at the time was babysitting the long distance equipment on off-normals, so it provided me with the time, and the computers, to work on the publication. I wanted to add photos to the newsletter, so I started to shoot the events when I wasn’t actually running in them. So now I was hooked on the administration and on publishing.

1992 was also a bit of a low point in the history of the Executive. Brian announced that he was taking a year off. Jim Pascoe had moved to Florida for the Winter. At one Board meeting, there was President Bob Wilson, Treasurer Richard Kihn, and myself. We didn't even have enough of a quorum to play cards! One of Bob Wilson's achievements was to establish close ties with the Runners Choice Running Series – the largest in Ontario. This gave the association a much higher profile in the running community. After Bob's two-year stint, I took over as President in 1994. In my first President's Report, in the Newsletter, I noted "The Ontario Masters receive 10% of the \$40 yearly membership fee that goes to the CMAA.....\$4 from each member is a joke – this has to change". In 1997, with the help of Bruce Savage, the Ontario Masters Track & Field Association became incorporated. We were advised that this would protect the Executive from any liability in the event of any legal claims against the association. We're volunteers after all. Doug, Brian, and Richard Kihn, the Treasurer, were made the executive officers and the constitution was replaced with 'By Law #1'. Brian Keaveney designed the new logo and our motto "Athletics through life – Life through Athletics".



Also in 1997, we added the 30-34 age group to our events. Other masters associations has different entry level ages for men and women, but the OMTFA did not differentiate between them. We launched the Ontario Masters Web Site in 1999. Jim Pascoe was the web master. Despite working with a 5M space, Jim was able to upload same-day event results, keep a schedule, post entry forms, and provide all of the information required in the new Internet age. 12 years after my first editorial on the subject, in my Provincial Director's Report at the CMAA AGM in 2006, I was still working for a change in the membership process: "Our Treasurer recently issued a financial forecast for the coming year that indicates that we will have a shortfall in revenues to cover our expenses. While we will probably cover this shortfall with an increase in entry fees to our ten events, it brings to mind the inequities of the CMAA membership/fee structure that I have been outlining for a number of years.

In every other province, the masters-age athlete joins the provincial body to participate in their events. Only in Ontario do we have to join the national body (the CMAA) to participate in Ontario Masters events. In the other provinces, the membership fee stays in the province. In Ontario, the OMTFA only receives \$6.00 of the \$40.00 membership fee. All other provincial members are able to enter the National track and cross country championships without a separate CMAA membership.

They are also able to enter all USATF Championships. It's only the WMA Indoor and Outdoor Championships that require a National body membership."

At the 2007 CMAA AGM, I tabled my proposal that the Ontario Masters were going to take over our own memberships. We offered the CMAA \$25 from each of our memberships, for the next two years, so that they would be considered CMAA members. After some discussions, this offer was accepted. The rather large percentage of the \$40 membership fee was offered as a good-will gesture to help the CMAA in the transition. In 2008, the Ontario Masters became officially affiliated with the Ontario Track & Field Association. All of our members were automatically OTFA members.

2009 - At the AGM of the membership, on January 14th, 2009, the membership voted to change the name of the association to **ONTARIO MASTERS ATHLETICS** and to adopt a new logo.



2020 – At a Special Meeting of Members, the Board passed a Special Resolution:

To dissolve the Not For Profit (NFP) Corporation that is Ontario Masters Athletics Inc. and become a Masters Council under the auspices of Athletics Ontario.

Wintario Funding in the 80's

*From the Fall 1983 MASTERpiece - update on the funding that came from the **Wintario Lottery** to OMTFA members...*

- members could apply for 25% of their travel costs to go to an OMTFA Championship (just one per year)
 - OMTFA Champions in any event/age group could apply for 50% of their travel and accommodation to the same event at the CMAA National Championships
 - OMTFA members who are National Champions could apply for 25% of their travel and accommodation to the International Championships in the same event. That applied to one of;
 - North American Championships
 - World Championships
 - IGAL Road Racing Championships (World Champs)
 - CAN/AM Cross Country
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