



Signals

News and notes from the
Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association
Highland, NY 12528
www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net

Volume 8 Number 2

Fall 2011

MoonWalk Will Lead Off Event-full Trail Fall

by Claire Costantino

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association is again having its Harvest Moonwalk as part of the Hudson River Valley Ramble that offers 182 weekend events during September along the Hudson from Saratoga County to New York City. MoonWalk is also the lead-off event for other Rail Trail happenings coming up in October (*see articles on page 3*).

The Harvest MoonWalk will be on Friday September 9, from 7:30PM to 8:30PM. This is the only time that the Rail Trail is open after dark. It starts at the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Depot at 101 New Paltz Road and goes to Tony Williams Park at Riverside Road. The walk is a 3-mile round-trip if you go all the way.

Bring flashlights, but leave dogs, pets, bikes, scooters, roller blades and skate boards at home. The charge for the event is \$5.00 per person; children

INSIDE: Bike Safety, p. 4-5
"The Rail Trail is a linear park not a speedway exclusively for bikers."

6 and under are free. The evening also includes a bonfire and a storyteller. Donuts, popcorn and cider will be served. The event is rain or moonshine. For more info, please visit www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net.

The Hudson River Ramble is sponsored annually by the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, Hudson River Valley Greenway and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Estuary Program. For a complete listing of events, visit www.hudsonrivervalley.com/ramble. To receive a free printed program guide, call (800) 453-6665, or e-mail ramble@hvc.rr.com. The Ramble brochure is a comprehensive regional recreational guide that can be a useful reference throughout the year. •

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President's Message

The beauty of our Rail Trail continues to get noticed as seen in a recent publication and the increased use for events and gatherings:

The Rail Trail, complete with wonderful photos of the trail and the Highland Station Caboose, is featured in the Fall '11 issue of the Rails to Trails Conservancy publication, "rails to trails". An outstanding article by Ben Keene points to the Hudson Valley Rail Trail and Walkway Over the Hudson as New York destinations.

Use of our trail grows each month as organizations stage their events along the trail and at the Highland Station. Groups such as 123 Play, Bike New York, Bike the Hudson Valley, Get Your Guts in Gear, the Maplewood School, Ragnar Relay, Highland Boy Scouts Troop 70, Walkway Over the Hudson, ALS Association and the Town of Lloyd Events Committee's premier event, HudsonFest to name a few.

Of course, our own events such as Breakfast on Black Creek, HVRTA's 5K Race/Walk, Harvest Moon-Walk, An Evening Under the Stars! Gala and the ever popular WinterFest keep our trail in constant use.

A new venue has been added to the trail's experience by the Town of Lloyd Historical Preservation Society with creation of the Hamlet Loop Walking Tour featuring historic photos showcasing Highland history.

The tour begins at the Route 9W trailhead, continues along Route 9W to Milton Avenue into the Highland Hamlet along Vineyard Avenue, Main Street and Church Street returning to Vineyard Avenue, turning onto Commercial Avenue and re-entering the Hudson Valley Rail Trail at the Commercial Avenue trailhead. One can also do the tour in reverse by continuing on the Rail Trail to the Commercial Avenue trailhead, walk into the Highland Hamlet and return to Route 9W via Milton Avenue. Anyway you care to walk the loop is great fun. Be sure you stop in the Hamlet to view the photos and visit the shops and restaurants.

As always, enjoy the trail and be courteous to your neighbors.

Happy trails,

Claire

Claire R. Costantino, President
Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.

Rail Trail Wants You

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association is looking for new board members to help maintain the Rail Trail as well as work on events and programs that utilize the great setting this ribbon of recreation and reflection provides to visitors.

This is an active Board of Directors with members taking on individual responsibilities. Your reward will be the satisfaction of knowing you are making a difference in the community. Inquiries should be directed to Claire Costantino at rebenal@aol.com or 845-691-2066. ♦



Signals

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Evening Under the Stars Gala on Rail Trail

Want to enjoy a unique experience on the Rail Trail that will help support its programs? Plan to attend the 2nd Annual *Evening Under the Stars Gala* on Saturday evening October 8th.

This premier Hudson Valley Rail Trail event takes place at 75 Haviland Road, Highland, i.e. where the Hudson Valley Rail Trail meets Walkway Over the Hudson. It's a black tie optional affair that it is worth dressing up for.



The event is rain or star-shine under festively decorated tents as shown in photo on the right. It starts off with drinks and elaborate finger food at 6PM under lights (see left). Dinner follows with dancing to a live band.



The evening also features a Silent Auction with some impressive items including airline flights and NYC hotel stays. Gala tickets are \$125 per person or \$1200 for a table of 10. For reservations or additional information, please contact Claire Costantino at 845-691-2066 or rebenal@aol.com.

Reservations deadline is September 30 and seating is limited. Don't hesitate, make your reservation now. •

HudsonFest 2011 Will Be A Fun-filled Event

HudsonFest will take place on Sunday October 9th from 10AM to 6PM on the Rail Trail near the Walkway entrance. Numerous vendors, including 30 in arts and crafts will be fanned out along the trail for a half a mile.

The event celebrates the contributors of taste, sound, vision and artistry to the Hudson Valley and the hamlet of Highland. Here you will find the product of Highland and valley merchants, farms, vineyards, restaurants, artists and more that make our community so special.

The time of year will be beautiful. Fall colors will surround you while you eat, drink and consider items to buy. Don't miss the opportunity to walk on the Rail Trail and over Walkway while you are at it. Or go West to visit the Hamlet of Highland's self-guided tour. Just follow the trolley car stencils on the trail and sidewalks.

In addition a number of non-profit organizations will be displaying their materials. Learn about things to do in the community. •



all photos on this page by Vivian Photography

Bike Safety on Our Mixed-Use Rail Trail

by Rafael Díaz

Our Rail Trail has witnessed a sharp increase in usage ever since its connection to Walkway Over the Hudson in Fall 2010. Such increased traffic is certainly welcomed and the desire of all those who have made the Rail Trail possible. But with it comes a safety issue. The Rail Trail is a multi-use linear park that attracts families with kids, walkers, runners and bicyclists on to a paved path that is just 12 feet wide. While everyone should be courtesy toward other users, the safety onus falls most heavily on bicyclists whose vehicles have the potential to harm pedestrians. Recent encounters illustrate this point.

On Sunday, July 17th, a commercially-arranged bicycle event poured 850 speedy bikes on to the Rail Trail its entire length from Tony Williams Park to Walkway. The organizers did not seek permission nor did it advise its participants (who paid \$102 each) as to the mixed nature of the Rail Trail. Moreover, the organization web site encouraged speeding on what it said was a car less safe place for riders to fly.

I was out running on the trail that day with several friends. Most of the bicyclists ignored the existence of other users of all ages. They often were riding two and three abreast at speed. At one time, I was parallel to oncoming riders moving two abreast who were suddenly passed by a tight single file of six or eight bicyclists. As the lead rider passed she yelled back to her friends that her speedometer indicated 17mph! Imagine what it felt like to be on foot at that spot of a now very narrow feeling trail.

One local marathon runner who was out earlier felt so threatened by the bike riders that she switched over to run on New Paltz Road. She preferred taking her chances with cars on that road with little or no shoulder room.

Not Just The Spandex Types

Okay. One could chalk up that encounter to an unsanctioned event that ignored the multi-use nature of the Rail Trail. The problem is that it is not just the racers that ignore safety rules; it also can be the recreational rider.

On Saturday, August 13th, I was out running with a group of runners including some graduates of the Spring 2011 Learn To Run Class who were preparing for the 5K Race the following week. I was alone about 150 feet ahead of a group of three runners when I

suddenly heard a cry behind me. I turned to see two people on the ground and an overturned bike.

Two recreational bike riders had come from behind without giving any warning. One whipped around the left side, startling one runner who moved to her right just as the other rider tried to thread the needle between her and the other two runners. The rider hit the runner and both hit the ground. Minor cuts and bruises as the collision was at relatively low speed but not low enough not to knock someone over.

Since the July bike event incident, I have been overtaken from behind by countless bike riders who have given no warning. I have called out to them about the need to warn of their presence, with my words ignored or met with a shrug of the shoulder.

So, What Are Bike Safety Rules?

The Rail Trail recently got an email from a walker who uses the linear park with his family. He praised the wonders of the trail but wanted to know what is the proper etiquette for bike riders, saying that "*Occasionally a bicyclist will come up behind us and pass as close as 2 or 3 inches. So close that if I were to turn my torso a bit or raise my arm I would be struck or clipped by the bike.*" Here is the answer:

- ❑ ***Bike riders must yield to pedestrians.*** This means that they must warn pedestrians (running, walking, meandering) when overtaking them from behind (also when overtaking a slower bike rider). Bike riders should use a bicycle bell or call out: "*Coming up on your left*" or "*On your left.*"
- ❑ ***Bike riders also must go slow*** when either overtaking or oncoming to other users. This is especially true around families with children, who are unpredictable and might suddenly dart out in their path or when pedestrians have dogs on leash that may also move in the way suddenly.
- ❑ ***Other courtesy/safety considerations.*** Bike riders and pedestrians should never proceed on the trail more than two abreast. This allows for safer passage of speedier users around slower ones. Bike riders should pass pedestrians in single file whether overtaking or on-coming.

(continued on page 5)

- ❑ **There is no speed limit on our Rail Trail, yet.** Many bike riders do move at considerable speeds, which is OK when no one else is around or ahead and they are keeping a sharp eye out and not lost in a zone. Once a bike rider approaches pedestrians, safety considerations dictate that the bike rider should start slowing down well before, at a safe distance. This may be a nuisance for those bicyclists using the trail for speed training purposes but the Rail Trail is a linear park *not* a speedway exclusively for bikers. •

A Very Special Thanks To:

Keith Garbounoff for mowing area to the right of the pavilion

Tim Baker and Son for mowing the area in front of the pavilion

Dorine Merrill for managing the trailhead plantings at Commercial Avenue entrance

Ed Boden for managing the planting area around the flagpole at the pavilion

How It Should Be Done

Below is an example of how biker riders should be using the Rail Trail while ready to alert and yield to pedestrian users whom they may be overtaking from behind.

The two riders are coming along on a section of the trail where there is no one else around. They are safely riding two abreast.



They come to a pedestrian ahead of them. At a safe margin of distance behind, they slow down and call out that they will be passing on the left. The pedestrian steps slightly to the right while the two riders go into single file and give a safe, wide berth around the walker. ♦



Rail Trail Events In 2011

Harvest MoonWalk September 9th, 7:30-8:30PM: Begins at Rail Trail Depot at 101 New Paltz Road. The only time you can walk the Rail Trail at night and enjoy the full moon. \$5 admission includes bonfire, storyteller & refreshments.

Learn to Run Program starts September 17th at 9AM at the Depot. A 10 week program that will make a runner of you, whether old or young, able to run 20 minutes nonstop. Meet at Rail Trail Depot at 101 New Paltz Road.

Hudson Valley Rail Trail Gala - An Evening Under the Stars! October 8, 2011, starts at 6PM. The event will take place on the trail at 75 Haviland Road beginning with a cocktail reception followed by dinner and dancing. This is a black tie optional event and will be held rain or star-shine under festively decorated tents.

HudsonFest 2011, October 9, 2011, 10AM to 6PM. A festival on the Rail Trail to celebrate what the Valley has to offer with a focus on the arts, artisans, crafts people, farmers, wineries, local restaurants, food vendors, distilleries, breweries, agri-business, non-profits and community service organizations. Entrance at 75 Haviland Rd.

Winterfest-January 14, 2012, 11AM-2PM. Chili cook-off by various restaurants, ice carving demonstration, roasted chestnuts and toasted marshmallows. Hay rides on the trail, kids activities. 101 New Paltz Road.

Vandalism Mars Sections of the Rail Trail

by Rafael Díaz

Recent headlines scream out stories of rioting and looting throughout England and other places on the Continent. In the US, flash mobs of youth in Mid Western cities and Philadelphia enter stores and loot them of valuables. Closer to home, and on a relatively more modest scale but nevertheless troubling, the Hudson Valley Rail Trail has been having its share of vandalism.

During the week of June 20th of this year, vandals graffitied the Rail Trail in several locations. They spray painted profanities under the 9W Overpass and nearby retaining wall. Further West, they attacked the Exercise Stations between Commercial Avenue and the Rotary Pavilion. Extensive spray painting was done on about a half dozen of the Exercise Station signs and on some of the equipment. They also spray painted the plexiglass at the Commercial Avenue information kiosk. (Earlier, some of the exercise signs had been kicked in and broken.)

Baker Brothers who do volunteer maintenance work on the Rail Trail, volunteered to try to remove the spray painting. It was able to do so at 9W but not on the signs, which could not be removed by power wash and chemicals.

The signs have to be replaced at the cost of upwards of \$5,000. The Highland Rotary Club, with help from generous donors, presented the Exercise Stations course to the Rail Trail as part of its celebration of the 100th anniversary of Rotary International. The club will pick up the \$1,000 deductible of the

insurance coverage and the hope is the insurer will cover all the rest.

Public Reaction

Users of the Rail Trail universally were upset when they came upon the damage. It detracted from the enjoyment of what is a highlight attraction of the good life in Highland. The Highland Police investigated the incident and kept an eye out for leads.

Meanwhile, to help the investigation along, a \$1,000 reward was raised with private and Rail Trail funds. Stories appeared in the local press and reward signs were posted all along the trail. Using the psychology of scarcity, the \$1,000 reward was made available for several weeks and then stepped down \$100 per week until it went down to \$500. The case remains open.

The Rail Trail belongs to us all and needs protection by us. Do your part: If you see something, say something. •



Shows Frame With Graffiti Damaged Sign Removed For Later Replacement

Successful 5K Race On Trail

On August 20th the Hudson Valley Rail Trail held its second 5K run/walk race that went from Walkway Over the Hudson westward to the end of the Exercise Stations and back. Once again it was a success largely due to Vince Veltre and a host of volunteers from the community and members of the Rail Trail board of directors.

Vince's day job is with the Town of Lloyd Building Department but his passion is racing at various distances in which he often places or wins in his age group. He also directs and sets up timing for foot races throughout the region. Naturally, when it came to organizing the inaugural 5K Race last year to celebrate the connection of the trail with Walkway, we turned to Vince.

This year's 5K race drew 93 runners and walkers on to one of the prettiest sections of the trail. Nine of the runners were graduates of the Learn-to-Run program, five of whom just graduated in June.

Congratulations to Vince, all the volunteers and all the racers who participated. ♦

Learn To Run Program: A Success Story

by Rafael Díaz

The Learn-To-Run Program has many success stories, the most inspiring being individuals quite out of shape who persevered through the lessons to become runners. *The poster-child success story is Crystal Sundaramoorthy from our Spring 2011 Class.*

Crystal had plenty of barriers to overcome. These started with her weight but also encompassed her medical history. She has one liver transplant and two kidney transplants. The Learn-To-Run Program is designed to take people of all ages, sizes and athletic-

cism from no running to being able to run 20 minutes non-stop in just 10 weeks. It works for individuals like Crystal for two reasons: *1) the gradual increase in the running portion each week with walking breaks; and 2) Donna Deepröse who stays at the back of the pack to encourage and cajole the slowest of the slow to keep running even*



Me with Crystal at Spring 2011 Class graduation

if a walker comes along and is able to pass them.

How well has Crystal done? She lost a lot of weight, graduated the program; and with her husband Sethu, who also was in the class, continued to add to her runs, getting up to 50 minutes or more. Crystal earlier had set her sights on running a 5K if she could manage to make it through graduation. She searched around for one that was on a meaningful date for her: the 10th anniversary of her being diagnosed with kidney failure. This was the 5K Damon Runyon Race on August 7th at Yankee Stadium that included running the corridors and field track and climbing stadium steps. She did it!

Our Fall 2011 Class begins on September 17th. Think about it. For info call me at 845-255-7742 or email:ralphdiaz@optonline.net •



Crystal & Sethu wearing finisher medals at stadium

Membership Form

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating, maintaining, promoting, and improving the Hudson Valley Rail Trail for the benefit of the public. Please help by becoming a member and volunteering your talents. (*You can join at www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net*)

\$15 Individual \$20 Family \$50-\$99 Patron \$100-499 Supporting \$500 Benefactor

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ E-Mail _____

I'd like to volunteer for:

Trail Maintenance
 Special Events
 Ecology Projects
 Other (Specify) _____

Newsletter
 Fund Raising
 Refreshments

Please send form and check payable: Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.
12 Church Street, Highland, New York 12528

Signals



...from the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association

Don't miss!

Harvest MoonWalk 2011 on the Hudson Valley Rail Trail

**Where: Rotary Pavilion
101 New Paltz Road, Highland
Friday, Sept. 9, 2011, 7:30PM to 8:30PM**

www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Highland, New York 12528

Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.
12 Church Street

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