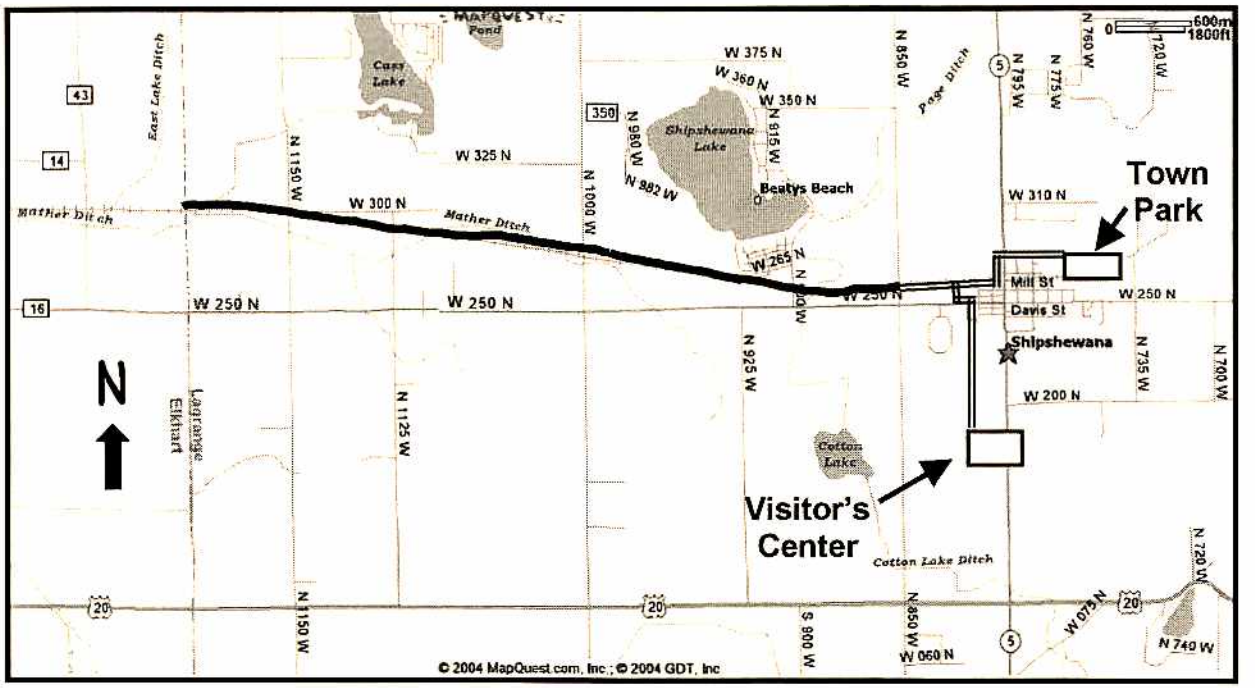
Pumpkinvine Trail Talk
Volume 14 No. 2
September 2005

Construction costs for the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail in LaGrange County funded



Another major section of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail has received funding for construction.

In July, the town of Shipshewana received notification that it will receive $1 million for construction of 5.3 miles of the Pumpkinvine in LaGrange County. The grant comes from the transportation enhancement funds of the federal transportation program through the Indiana Department of Transportation. The Friends have designated this section of the trail as Phase 4.

The 5.3 miles go from the Elkhart-LaGrange County line and extend into Shipshewana, ending at the town park, with a spur going south to the new Visitor's Center (see the map above). The Elkhart County Park Department received a $560,000 grant for construction of the 2.4 miles from Middlebury to the LaGrange County line last year—Phase 3 of the trail.

"We were delighted that Shipshewana has received this grant," said Jim Smith, Friends executive director. "With the grant to Elkhart County Parks Department last year, the funding is now available to allow construction of the trail from Middlebury into Shipshewana."

Management of the construction will be the responsibility of the town of Shipshewana. Norm Kauffmann, the recently retired Town Manager of Shipshewana, has been retained by the town to manage this project as well as their new Visitor's Center now under construction.

At an appropriate point in this project, the Friends will donate to Shipshewana the corridor from the Elkhart/LaGrange County line to CR 850W, on the west edge of Shipshewana (solid line on the map above). This is a critical donation as it will constitute a large portion of the 20% matching funds that INDOT requires for a grant of this type. The town of Shipshewana will be responsible for the acquisition of land from CR 850 W to the town park and the Visitor's Center (double line on the above map).

Jim Smith worked with the town of Shipshewana in preparation of the grant. The tentative completion date of the Phase 4 section is late 2008.

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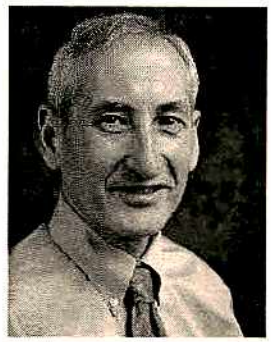
From the president



Closing the gap—again

The lead article in this issue announces the great news that Shipshewana received $1 million to construct the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail in LaGrange County. That section of trail will connect with the Elkhart County portion and make a continuous six-mile trail from Middlebury to Shipshewana. Think of the $1 million as closing the gap between the Elkhart County line and Shipshewana.

It's been a long time in the making, but the wait has been worth it.

After helping Shipshewana prepare the TEA-21 grant last fall, our focus has been on closing the eight-mile gap in the Pumpkinvine corridor between CR 28 north of Goshen and Middlebury. We had numerous meetings with adjacent landowners to resolve where the trail should be in order to make farming easier.

This section of the corridor is challenging in many ways. It has sections we do not own and other sections where we've negotiated land swaps to accommodate farmers where the corridor cut diagonally through their fields.

But the greatest challenge for the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. is raising the funds that will be needed to make this section grant eligible. Those expenses include legal fees for the complex real estate transactions that result from land swaps, numerous surveys, deed preparation, title insurance, closing costs and the major expense—the purchase of those sections of the corridor we don't yet own.

When we purchased the Pumpkinvine corridor from Penn Central in 1993, we knew that Penn Central didn't own it all. Several adjacent landowners had purchased small sections of the corridor from the railroad and not all deeds were as strong as we'd like. But we believed that once the community saw the potential for this linear park, owners who had purchased the corridor would be willing to sell or donate their section for the good of the community.

That prediction and hope came true. Almost immediately after we announced the purchase from Penn Central, an owner of the corridor in Middlebury offered to sell his section to us. Later Coachman Industries and several individuals donated the land they owned along Railroad Street in Middlebury to the Friends.

Still, that leaves several gaps in the corridor to purchase.

This fall we will be asking our members to help us raise $40,000 over and above our regular income from memberships to cover the costs mentioned above. Our board has already pledged $10,000 toward that goal, leaving $30,000 to raise. Unlike many non-profit organizations, the Friends have not bombarded you with requests for funds. We've made only one request in the past five years.

We hope you will consider this request seriously. We've closed the gap between Elkhart County and Shipshewana this year. Now it's time to finish the job.

– John D. Yoder

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. are cyclists, hikers, equestrians and naturalists who are working with area park departments to create a linear park and greenway on the former Pumpkinvine corridor between Goshen, Middlebury and Shipshewana, Ind.

Learn more about the Pumpkinvine and Rails to Trails issues, or see back issues of our newsletter at: **www.pumpkinvine.org**

A Pumpkinvine kaleidoscope

By Danny Graber

The day of the Pumpkinvine bike ride always reminds me of looking into a kaleidoscope. In the morning when bicyclists come spilling into the parking lot, I see colorful clothing and bicycles, donned by another kaleidoscope of eager and entertaining personalities.

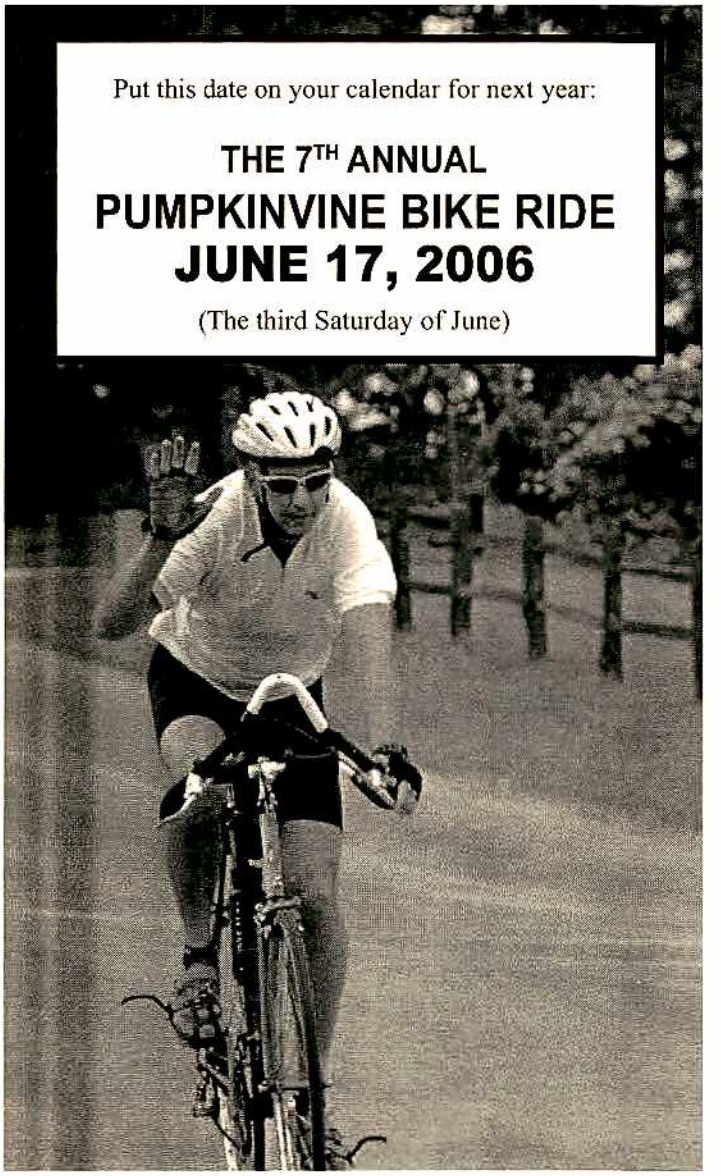
The colorful, costumed bicyclists are a stark contrast to the day before the ride when we ride planners are hustling around in a world of gray, trying to get things done and in place up to the last second. But once the last second passes, the transformation starts. Swirls of colors and patterns abound.

It was delightful to see so many bicyclists enjoying the warm summer air and visiting with other people. The weather was nearly perfect—our riders and volunteers even more so!

I'm pleased to report that there were no misfortunes of any significance this year and not many flats. Nor did we hear of a spill this year.

As the planning committee and I work on each year's ride, a common goal underlies our efforts: the desire to make this ride a pleasant and entertaining experience. To improve the ride, we invite you to tell us about your experience—the good and the bad. Each year we make changes based on comments from both riders and volunteers. The changes are noticed, invariably, by other riders.

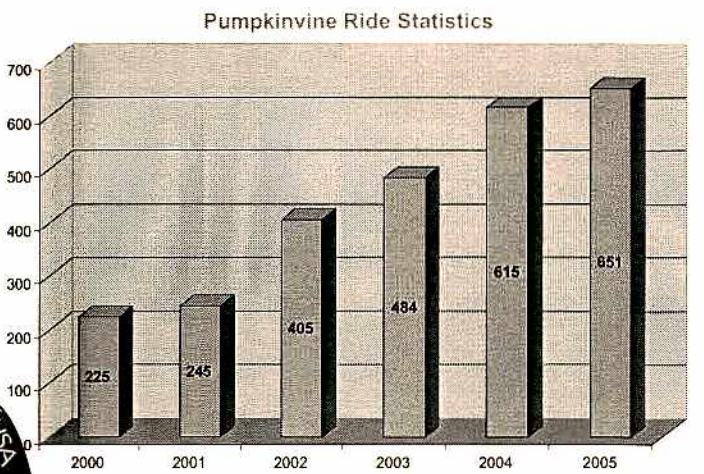
Thank you all for making it a wonderful day. See more ride photos at http://www.pumpkinvine.org/html/2005_ride_photos.html.

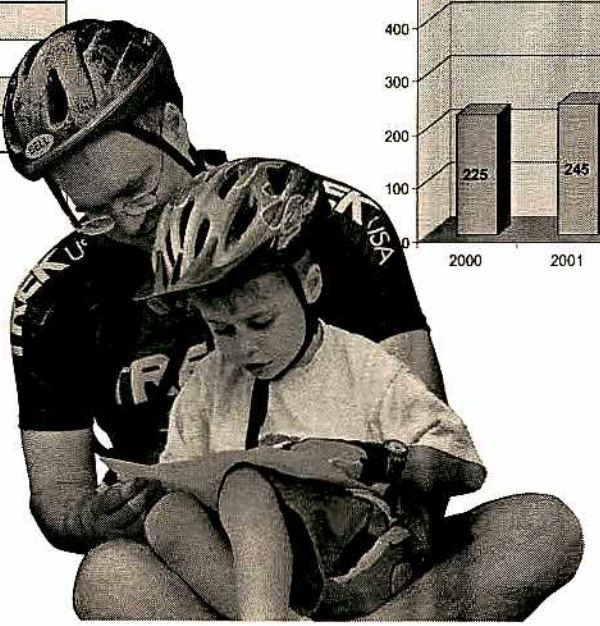


2005 ride statistics

WHERE RIDERS CAME FROM	
Indiana	478
Michigan	95
Illinois	51
Ohio	12
Arizona	1
Wisconsin	3
South Dakota	2

MILES THEY RODE	
Miles	Number
17	105
22	117
42	181
65	131
102	78

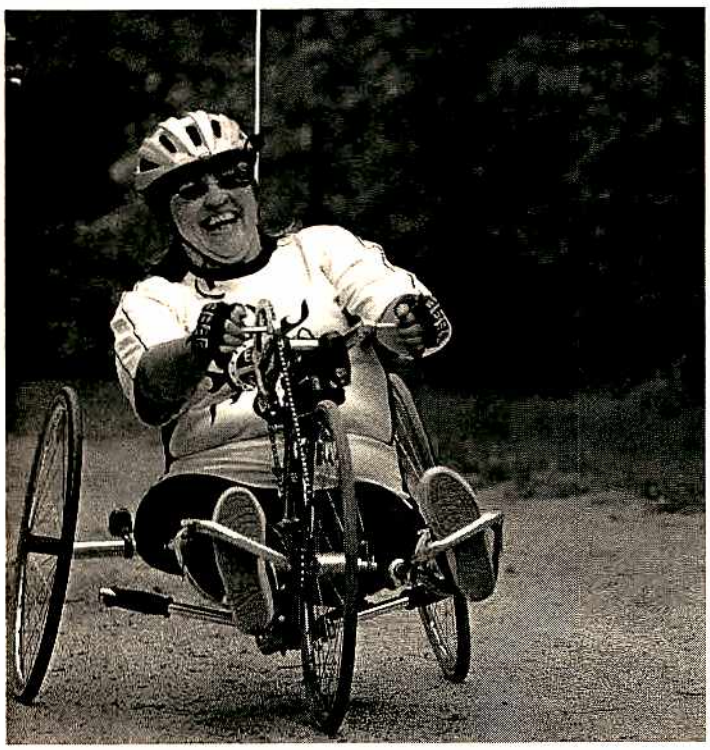


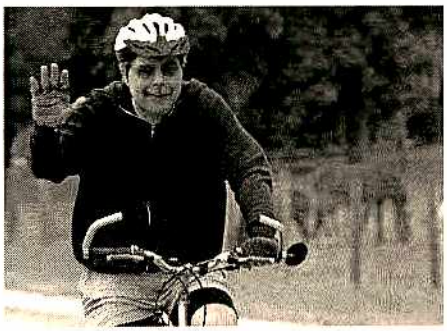


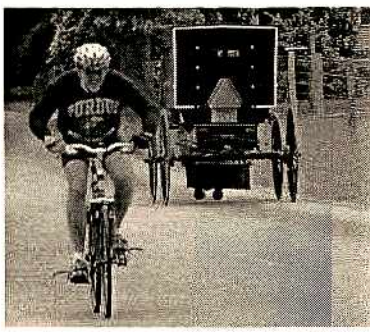
Scenes from the 2005 Pumpkinvine Ride

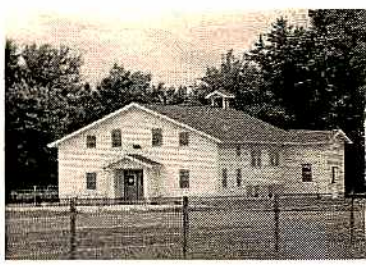
This is our 4th Pumpkinvine—and it is one of our VERY favorites! The volunteers are the BEST... The SAGS are soooo generous—the cookies were sooooo good!!!! I also loved those little Bagels and Cream Cheese... It's always good to see Rose at the Shipshe sag—and the table cloths and flowers at LaGrange made the lunch even more enjoyable. There were so many foals this year—and the gardens were beautiful as always. This is such a GREAT ride... Thank you for your hard work.

—Bruce and Mindy Lankenau, Claypool, Ind.









"We loved the horse farms and Amish gardens. We're from Goshen, and we rode on roads we'd never seen before." —Marie Clemens, Goshen, Ind.

"When I go into the sag, I feel like a vine. When I leave, I feel like a pumpkin." —Don DeMeyer, South Bend, Ind.

"We love your ride...this our 3rd year and [we] brought many friends... ...do you know the date for next year yet?" —Tony

The ride was wonderful. The pie and ice cream are a great draw." —Duane and Bev Larkin, Detroit, Mich.

"The rest stops 1-12 miles apart were perfect. The food and routes were wonderful." —Vonnie Sypkens, Grand Rapids, Mich.

2005 Pumpkinvine Bike Ride volunteers

Abshire Park registration & food service
Dierra Lehman
Janice Carrico
Karen Lee
Sherry Howland
Stacy James (afternoon)
Lois Nafziger
Bill Schmidt
June Yoder
Liese Kreiser

Food delivery
Byron Yoder
Tom Kreiser

Homebase parking
John King
Don Hyde
Alma Ousley
Dwight Fish
Larry Hahn

CR 28 traffic
Elvie Bontreger

SR 13 traffic
Ed Weske

Orpha Drive traffic
Mike Bontreger

Spring Street traffic
Dawn Hatch

Middlebury registration
Frances Ringenberg
Phyllis Hostetler

Middlebury parking
Gordon Hostetler
Kathie Holdeman

Middlebury SAG
Jim Smith
Sherry Smith
Darrel Sommers
Karen Sommers
Tim Weldy
Judy Weldy
John Zitlaw
Audra Zitlaw

Shipshewana SAG
Marlene Miller
Rose Long
Bill Long
Allan Ritchie

Roger's Park SAG
Larry Neff
Mic Stouder
Randy Stouder
Susie Neff
Daniel Neff

County Line SAG
Rhonda Yoder
Mary Schaffer
Stephen Cripe
Jean Kincaid
Joe Kring
Alice Kring

Roving SAGs/bike mechanics
Wilmer Hollinger
Jeremy Profitt
Max Laudeman
Vernon Yoder
Gary Richards

Photographers
John McKee Jr.
Ryan Miller
John Yoder

Brochure
Dee Birkey

Committee
Danny Graber
Bob Carrico
Georgia Gingrich
Merritt Lehman

Volunteers
Bob Hatch

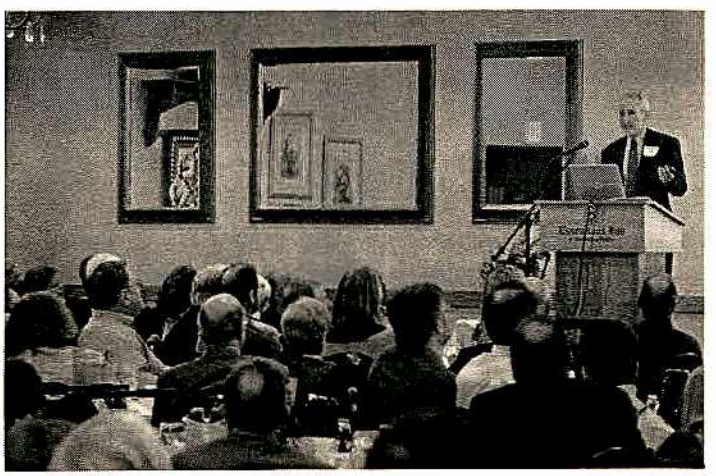
Martin's SUPER MARKETS
MMA Stewardship Solutions
RAYMOND JAMES & ASSOCIATES, INC.
SUPREME CORPORATION DRIVEN TO GO THE EXTRA MILE
zimmer

We would like to thank these local businesses who helped support the 6th Annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride.

Put this date on your calendar for next year:

THE FRIENDS
2006 ANNUAL MEETING
TUES., APRIL 25, 2006

Farmstead Inn and Conference Center
Shipshewana, Ind.



John McKee, Jr.

2005 Annual meeting features Middlebury trail section

Marks Salee *(shown above)*, president of the Middlebury Park Board, was the featured speaker at the Friends annual meeting April 28. Salee gave a progress report on construction of the Middlebury Greenway. Friends president John Yoder *(shown left)* also gave an update on the overall status of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. Approximately 230 people attended the event at the Essenhaus in Middlebury.

Middlebury section of trail to be dedicated

Construction of the Middlebury greenway on the Pumpkinvine corridor is nearly complete, according to Mark Salee, Middlebury park board president. The trail is paved, curb cuts are installed, and the cross walks are stripped. "People are riding it now," Salee said.

Dedication of the greenway will be on Sept. 17.

The greenway is.65 miles long and goes north and south between Wayne St. and York Dr., a block west of SR 13, parallel to Railroad Street and adjacent to Krider Garden. Construction was funded by a Recreational Trails grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc., donated the land to the town of Middlebury, and the land represented 100 percent of the local matched needed to secure the grant.

Looking south from the bridge over the Little Elkhart River, the trail connects to Krider Garden on the right.

Need a refill?
Need a refill for your Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail pen? Try the #65873 Uni-ball refill that is available from office supply stores.

Rhonda Yoder elected to board member

By B. Harry Dyck

Rhonda Yoder, originally of Kalona Iowa, was elected to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. board in May. She is currently employed by the City of Goshen in Planning and Community Development.

Rhonda comes to her board duties from a state that has hundreds of miles of bicycle trails, and she brings with her a wide range of qualifications and personal interests for the job. Not the least of her qualifications are her years of experience doing community development work, both locally and internationally, in Botswana, Ghana and Nepal and her personal conviction that rails-to-trails projects, such as the Pumpkinvine, are indisputably a community asset.

Rhonda has a long-term love of the outdoors. Her appreciation of nature dates back to her childhood when she harbored baby birds that were still in their nests under her bed to protect them against predators or other perils of the night.

Rhonda is also an avid bicyclist, and in 2004 amassed approximately 2,000 miles on a tandem bicycle with her husband, Danny Graber. Together they have ridden other rail trails, not the least of which was the Katy Trail, a bike-walking trail over 200 miles long between Sedalia and St. Charles, Missouri. That trail ride in particular generated an enthusiasm for trail biking that helped her see the value of the Pumpkinvine for riders and walkers in Elkhart County. Rhonda envisions the Pumpkinvine Trail becoming a county or state park such as the Katy Trail has become.

"The Pumpkinvine Trail was in the making before I arrived in Elkhart County," she said, "but I'm encouraged by the momentum it has gained, and I'm happy to be part of it's on-going development."

Considering the growing interest in bicycling, both for recreation and commuting, Rhonda believes that the Pumpkinvine Trail would serve well as a connector between Goshen, Middlebury and Shipshewana. She expresses real perplexity in the attitudes of those seeking to obstruct the extension of the Pumpkinvine since such a trail would provide a functional and safe route of travel for those who prefer an alternate to automobiles. Rhonda affirmed the overtures that the current Pumpkinvine Board has continued to make to opponents of the trail in hopes that areas of contention might be resolved amicably.

You may become a member of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. or renew your membership by completing the form below. Your tax-deductible donation will be used to complete the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and toward paying the day-to-day expenses of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc. No officers receive remuneration.

By showing your membership card, you will be eligible for discounts on specified purchases at the following area bicycle shops: Elkhart Bicycle and Fitness, Elkhart; Family Bicycle, Elkhart; Hollinger Bicycle, Goshen; Lincoln Avenue Cycling and Fitness, Goshen; and House of Bicycles, Osceola.

Don't forget your membership dues!

If the date on the label of this newsletter has passed, it's time to renew your membership in the **Friends**. Membership levels are:

____ Individual $20	____ Family $30	____ Sustaining $50
____ Contributing $100	____ Patron $250	____ Benefactor $500

Send your membership payment to:

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail • P.O. Box 392 • Goshen, IN 46527

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

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