

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:

- |   |                                       |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20    | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$30  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$500 |

Send your membership payment to:

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## Property purchase for Phase 6 completed in Middlebury

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail have recently closed an important gap in the Pumpkinvine corridor. In October, the Friends purchased a 1,300-foot section of the Pumpkinvine on Middlebury's south side from Mary Heign. This section of the corridor had reverted to adjacent landowners when the railroad was abandoned because the original deed to the railroad was an easement.

"The purchase of the Heign property makes a continuous corridor from Wayne Street to US 20 and makes possible the eventual completion of Phase 6 of the Pumpkinvine project," said Jim Smith, Friends executive director.

The purchase is for the west half of the corridor—the section the Heigns owned—making this part of the trail narrower than most other sections. "We will have a narrower trail for a

quarter mile," Smith said, "but the important point is that we have continuity in the trail. Going around this section would have been nearly impossible."

As early as 2000, the Friends advised the Heigns of their interest in purchasing the west half of the corridor. However, the timing wasn't right for the Heigns. Then, in 2004 Mary's husband Ike and her son, Jeff, attended the Friends' annual meeting to become more acquainted with the project. One week later, on May 4, 2004, and before any further discussion of a purchase, Ike died tragically in an automobile accident.

When the Friends resumed contact this fall, we were excited to find that the Heign family supported the Pumpkinvine project and were willing to sell.

"To our great delight, we were able to close the transaction this past October," Smith said. "We are indeed grateful to Mary Lou Heign and her family for their advocacy of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail and their willingness to sell this section of the corridor. To show our appreciation for their critical support and to honor the Heign family's wishes, this portion of the corridor will be named in honor of the late Ike Heign. Thank you, Mary Lou, Jeff, Bob and Randy!"

### Middlebury trail dedicated

Supporters and community leaders gathered on the bridge over the Little Elkhart River September 17 to dedicate a section of the Middlebury Greenway on the former Pumpkinvine corridor. The .65-mile trail runs from York Dr. to Wayne Street where it connects with the Wayne Street bicycle-pedestrian path. South of the bridge it also connects to Krider Gardens. From left: Mark Salee, park board president; Gary O'Dell, town council president; Dan Frederick, park commissioner; Lowell Miller, town manager; John McKee, park board secretary.

*Photo by Gloria Salavarría*



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## From the president

### What is your legacy?

Most people I know hope that their lives have meaning beyond their mere physical time on earth. They want to make a difference. They want to leave the world a better place than it was when they came on the scene.

Two women associated with the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail illustrate that desire in very different ways.

The first is Mary Heign, who lives adjacent to the Pumpkinvine on Middlebury's south side. As you read in the story on page one, she recently sold the Friends approximately 1,300 feet of the Pumpkinvine corridor. Mary, with the support of her family, decided to make this sale because they believe closing this gap in the Pumpkinvine corridor will bring a developed trail closer to reality—something they think will be a major benefit for the Middlebury community. At the closing, she asked us somewhat impatiently: "When will this section be finished?"

This purchase, however, was tinged with sadness because Mary's husband, Ike, was not there to enjoy it. He died in a car accident in May 2004. The accident happened just a week after Ike and his son Jeff attend the Friends annual meeting.

As part of the purchase agreement, the Friends agreed to name this section of the trail for Ike. Through this transaction and remembrance his family will pass along a wonderful legacy to this community. Through their willingness to help us close a gap in the trail, they remind us and future generations of their desire to improve the opportunities for recreation and the quality of life in Middlebury and Elkhart County.

Another person who leaves a legacy for the good in this community is Beth Miller who died of cancer in November. Beth was a quiet but enthusiastic supporter of the Pumpkinvine. The first time I met Beth was during a work day in 1996 when we removed trees from the corridor near State Road 4 across from Abshire Park. I remember thinking at the time that for such a small person, she worked with tremendous energy and dedication. She helped on other Friends' work days and at several Pumpkinvine bike rides through 2004.

Beth was a committed environmentalist and artist. She knew that the trees she was removing from the corridor would ironically lead the preservation of many more trees, if the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail ever became a reality. She was an "early adopter" who 10 years ago saw the potential for a greenway on the Pumpkinvine to preserve and enhance the environment she loved. I didn't realize the extent of her commitment to the Pumpkinvine until I read in the paper that memorials in her honor were to go to the Friends.

The Heigns and Beth contributed in very different ways to making the trail a reality because they pitched in to help at critical times.

What will your legacy be to this community?

We invite you to make a difference through your continuing support of the Friends with time, advocacy and money.

— 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](http://www.pumpkinvine.org)

## Volunteers are vital to Friends' success

By Bob Carrico

Although Friends purchased the Pumpkinvine corridor from Penn Central in 1993, we have not had access to all of the property in intervening years. However, legal rulings late in 2004, surveying the corridor, the installation of fence along the corridor in LaGrange County and the acquisition of land that filled a gap in Middlebury have cleared the way for Friends to take charge of three miles of the Pumpkinvine corridor in 2005.

The Friends want to keep the corridor clear and walkable. In February, volunteers cleared a quarter-mile section east of CR 127 near Goshen, and in the spring, they cleaned two lines for new fences.

In May Jeff and Dawn Kessler organized seven volunteers to remove brush, trees and trash from a half-mile section of corridor east of CR 35. During the summer and autumn several additional work parties cleaned up railroad ties, fence posts and stones in LaGrange Co., cleared a quarter mile section east of CR 37 and cleared a mile of corridor from U.S. 20 to Spring St. in Middlebury.

Help from volunteers is critical to the success of these activities. We greatly appreciate the help from the following volunteers this year:

Jim Martin	Elvie Bontrager	Jack Hayes
David Brenner	Edward Mercer	Buddy Dyck
Jeff Kessler	Dawn Kessler	Bob Mayernick
Merritt Lehman	Donald Marti	Glen Miller
Jim Smith	Bob Carrico	John McKee

Over eight miles of corridor now need regular maintenance, e.g., surveillance, removal of trees that fall into the corridor from the wind and mowing in the summer. Thanks to the following volunteers for donating their time and tractors with mowers:

Quinn Holdeman	Dana Snider	Dale Eash
Kevin Rhodes	Rick Miller	

## Trail volunteers needed

### Become a Trail Maintenance Volunteer

Maintenance of 8-to-10 miles of corridor is a major task. Friends created the position, Trail Maintenance Volunteer, who will look after specified one or two mile sections. If you are interested in becoming a Trail Maintenance Volunteer in 2006 contact Bob Carrico at 266-1362 or rjcarrico1@verizon.net.

(Right) Jeff Kessler organized this work party which cleared a path through a half mile of corridor on May 21. Later Kevin Rhodes mowed the area with a bush hog on his old John Deere tractor.

Put these dates of upcoming Friends events on your calendars

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Pumpkinvine Bike Ride  
June 17, 2006

The Friends Annual meeting  
Tuesday, April 25, 2006  
Farmstead Inn and Conference Center  
Shipshewana, Ind.

## Friend's members hand out brochures

By Bob Hatch

Last fall several members of the Friends volunteered to hand out our brochures to interested people using the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail between SR 4 and CR 28. We felt this would be one of the best methods to get brochures to individuals using the trail but not familiar with the organization.

Overall volunteers distributed 59 brochures with just a few hours of effort. Miriam Stauffer picked a delightful mid-week fall day, took a lawn chair along, and greeted users as they passed. In three hours she distributed 12 brochures.

Some of the people volunteers talked with did not know that a volunteer organization had initiated the trail and that that group continues to work on opening up the much larger section of the Pumpkinvine corridor between CR 28 and Shipshewana.

We thank the volunteers Gordon and Phyllis Hostetler, Don and Alma Hyde, Carl Metzler, Rob Wise, Rachael Sutton, Miriam Stauffer and Myron Yoder for their participation. We will continue next spring. If you would like to volunteer, contact Bob Hatch at (574) 262-1739 or RHatch4723A@hotmail.com.

