Friends of

The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

Vol. 2, No. 2, March 1993

Newsletter

Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail are a group of local citizens who support by education and fund raising the area park departments in their effort to create a linear park on the former Penn Central right of way between Goshen and Shipshewana.

Board of Directors
Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Inc.

John D. Yoder, President -- 533-4943
Galen Kauffmann, Vice Pres. -- 534-0101
Chet Peachey, Secretary -- 533-3418
Clarence Yoder, Treasurer -- 533-2085
Norm Kauffmann, Fifth Member -- 533-8036
Karen Fergison, Membership -- 533-5763
Trudy Herkenroder, Publicity -- 875-1239
Sharol Raber, Special Events -- 848-4641
Richard Fay, Director -- 533-8621
Quinn Holdeman, Jr., Dir. -- 825-7258
Joe Lehman, Director -- 533-6518
Rosealene Long, Director -- 825-2555

This newsletter edited by Ginger Marcinkowski and John Yoder

Three more organizations support the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail

Great news for the Pumpkinvine! The Goshen City Council, Face of the City and Goshen Chamber of Commerce all added their voices to community support from the Trail

Goshen City Council

February 2 the Goshen City Council voted 5-1 to endorse the establishment of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. (One council member was absent.)

This bipartisan action was a major vote of confidence as we strive to create a safe and beautiful recreational trail for local residents and visitors to our area. Council president Allan Kauffman helped steer the resolution through the council, and Mayor Mike Puro offered his support to the project as well.

Linda Clark, Clair Hostetler, Sharon Chase, Joann Smith, Clarence Yoder and John Yoder spoke in favor of the resolution.

Face of the City

At their January 1993 meeting the Board of Directors of Face of the City voted to support the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. The Face of the City organization is working to revitalization downtown Goshen. Executive director Sharon Chase read the letter at the February 2 Goshen City Council meeting.

The letter concludes: "The Pumpkinvine Trail is an important part of the positive growth and preservation of our community and county, and Face of the City is pleased to add its support to the Friends of the Pumpkinvine project."

Chamber of Commerce

On March 16, the Goshen Chamber of Commerce voted unamimously to give its support to the Pumpkinvine Trail. Chamber executive secretary Sam Willits had previously received endorsements from the Chamber's tourism and community affairs subcommittees.

Friends hit the airwaves

Because of the generosity of Dan Jones of Goshen's Lincoln Avenue Schwinn, the Friends received 20 radio ads on WFRN to advertise our March meeting in Goshen. Dan donated the ads to further the cause of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. The ads contributed to attracting an overflow crowd for the meeting.

John Yoder was a guest on WKAM, WTRC and WLTA during March to explain the park.

Preserving Goshen's history

The Pumpkinvine has a rich history as a freight and passenger railroad. Now an opportunity has arisen for us to show the community our interest in historic preservation.

An abandoned railroad spur off the Pumpkinvine runs northwest across State Road 4 and Cottage Ave. to Main St. in Goshen. The "spur" was once the main line of the old New York Central system.

When the Friends board of directors learned of the upcoming demolition of a bridge on the spur that crosses Rock Run Creek, they sent a letter to Goshen Mayor, Mike Puro expressing the interest in preserving it as a link between the city's proposed bike-path system and the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail. The city engineering department agreed to allow the bridge to stand, if the Friends would supply the labor needed to do the much needed repairs.

Recycling this bridge is an exciting chance to gather community support for the Pumpkinvine. We can take an eyesore and restore it for future generations.

A work day will be announced for the project in late May or early June. Many volunteers will be needed for this to work. Make plans to work on this great project!

Businesses promote the trail

Thanks to the following businesses and organizations for providing space for us to display our brochures. You can thank them by giving them your support.

Dr. Larry Beachy's office, Goshen
Elkhart Bicycle Shop, Elkhart
Family Bicycle Center, Dunlap
Goshen Animal Clinic
Goshen Hospital
Goshen College Info Services
Greencroft Senior Center, Goshen
Hollinger Bicycles, Goshen
Julia Stauffer, CPA, Goshen
Lincoln Ave. Schwinn, Goshen
Midway Animal Clinic
Outspokin' Bike Shop, Granger
Workman, Hawkins Insurance Services

If you'd like to have brochures to display at your business, contact Jim Stickle at 533-9895.

More new members

Welcome to the 32 households who joined the Friends since the last newsletter! Membership now totals 188 households in five states.

Gilbert and Mae Alliman, Iowa City
Kenneth Cantzeler, Elkhart
Arthur Chapman, Goshen
Lee Cook, Bristol
Arthur Eberhardt, Angola
Larry Fredericks, Nappanee
Rita and Jon Gingerich, Goshen
Mark and Georgia Gingerich, Goshen
Mary Hankins, Middlebury
Greg and Dorie Hartzler, Goshen
Kurt and Bobby Hunsberger, Elizabeth City, N.C.
Otto and Jerrie Klassen, Goshen
Troy Lehr, Goshen
Joe and Alice Kring, Niles, Mich.
Michael and Ginger Marcinkowski, Elkhart
B.J. and Carolyn Miller, Goshen
Evan and Gwen Miller, Goshen
Larry Neff and family, Goshen
R. William and Shirley Phelan, Goshen
Matilda Rehm, South Bend
Gilbert and Lois Rhodes, Shipshewana
Dennis Sensenich, Goshen
Steven and Kate Shantz, Osceola
Andre and Cathy Gingerich Stoner, Elkhart
Glenn and Christine Stutzman, Goshen
Ron Thomas, Goshen
J. Roy and Carol Valencourt, Goshen
Paulette Van Antwerp, Goshen
Rondel Wenger, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Frederick and June Yoder, Goshen
Myron D. Yoder, Goshen

And a special **thank you** to a new Founding Member, Mike Bontreger of Elkhart! Founders are members who contribute $500 to the Friends. You ALL make a difference!

Letters from members

I whole heartedly support the creation of the trail, as I am an avid and experienced bicyclist. I had the opportunity to visit a newly opened, six-mile trail in Ohio near Mt. Vernon called the Kokosing Gap Trail . . . and was inspired as to what could be here. -- Myron D. Yoder, Goshen

Yesterday we received the pamphlet in the mail about the Pumpkinvine Trail. It was the first sort of pamphlet-fund raiser that I could get excited about in quite awhile. Not long ago I read a short article somewhere about the whole phenomenon of tracks-to-trails in the USA. It was wonderful to hear that it is happening all over, not just an isolated incident along the old Aurora & Elgin railway that is now the [Illinois] Prairie Path near my roots. I'm enthusiastic to send a contribution.
-- Kurt Hunsberger, Elizabeth City, NC

Opportunities to get involved

The following events need your participation. Contact coordinator and volunteer your help.

Apr. 10 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Bike Expo. Volunteers needed to staff table at Concord Mall. One-to-four hour shifts. Contact Sharol Raber, 848-4641.

Apr. 15 7 p.m., Friends of the Pumpkinvine Annual Meeting, Greencroft Senior Center, Goshen. All members are urged to attend.

Apr. 18 Earth Day Activities. Oxbow Park. Contact Sharol Raber, 848-4641.

Apr. 18 Equestrian ride for the Pumpkinvine, 10 a.m., Bonneyville Mill Park. Contact Quinn Holdeman Jr., 825-7258.

May 8 Kal-Haven Trailblazer. A fundraising event for the Kal-Haven State Park. Although proceeds go toward upkeep of the Kal-Haven, **the trail gives you a glimpse of what the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail could be.** Contact Kal-Haven Trailblazer, Box 80, Paw Paw, MI 49079. (616) 657-3232.

May 16 Goshen Noon Kiwanis Bike Ride. An opportunity to gather pledges for each mile you ride, with monies you raise going to the Pumpkinvine effort. Last year more than $1,000 was raised. The ride is in conjunction with the Goshen Noon Kiwanis. (Pledge sheet and brochure attached.)

June 4 Pumpkinvine Port-a-Pit Bar-B-Que at Linway Plaza. Lots of people needed. Contact Karen Fergison, 533-3763.

June 5 National Trails Day. Details to be announced. Contact Sharol Raber 848-4641.

Support these projects with your time and funds!

Middlebury and Goshen meetings well attended

February 11 and March 11, the Friends hosted public meetings, presenting its program to all interested parties. The turnouts were excellent, with 70-80 people attending each meeting.

The guest speaker at Middlebury was Steve Haddad, who originally opposed the creation of the Kal-Haven Trail in Michigan. His credibility as both an adjacent landowner and former foe of the linear trail was unique. He answered all questions in a calm, reassuring way.

Steve now serves on the Board of Directors for the Friends of the Kal-Haven Trail. He said he changed his mind about the trail when he saw how it would be run. Trail builders treated everyone fairly and went out of their way to accommodate special needs of adjacent land owners.

At the Goshen meeting John Yoder answered some of the questions raised in the Elkhart and Middlebury meetings about the use of federal money, wetlands, wildlife habitat and park safety.

What you can do to support the trail

1. **Enlisting your friends and family as members of our program.** John Yoder has recruited family members in three states. He figures that if they are going to enjoy the trail when they visit, they can help make it happen now.

2. **Volunteer to help with the upcoming projects.** Successful projects give the Friends needed visibility, which translates into more members. The more members we have, the more we can influence local political leaders who have the power to apply for federal and state money.

3. **Write letters to the editor of the** *Goshen News*, *Elkhart Truth* and *The Paper* . Keep them short and to the point. Tell what you've observed on other trails.

4. **Send articles to this newsletter on trails you may have enjoyed.**

5. **Write letters and/or call your County Council and Commissioners to voice your support for the Pumpkinvine.** It takes only a moment, but your voice can make a difference.

Elkhart Co. Commissioners

Patsy Ronzone, Dave Hess, Philip Neff -- 534-3541. Address, County Office Building, 117 N. 2nd St., Goshen, IN 46526.

Elkhart Co. Council

Frank Algate, Goshen - 533-7249
Ben Barnes, Elkhart - 295-5736
James Heckaman, Nappanee - 733-3082
Dean Hupp, Elkhart - 295-1450
John Letherman, Elkhart - 264-4098
Harmon Williams, At Large - 533-8471
Carl Yoder, At Large - 773-7062

6. **Support the Hometown Indiana Coalition.** Sue Dillon, Chair of the Hometown Indiana Coalition, urges all of us to write our state representatives and senators and Gov. Bayh urging them to fund Hometown Indiana (HI). The Pumpkinvine would receive $198,000, if HI were funded. Tell them you want $5 million of our $6.3 billion state budget to go toward developing our parks and other HI projects. Tell them you want HI funds administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in accordance with the HI guidelines. Funding can be provided through the budget or through Senate Bill 648. Letters to Gov. Evan Bayh and legislators can be addressed to: Indiana State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

7. **Write Marvin Reigsecker about HB 1851 and 1670.** (See below)

Important bills before State Senate

The Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail (and all rail-trail projects in Indiana) need your help.

Recently a bill passed the Indiana House of Representatives that would make it easier for adjacent property owners with reversionary rights to claim a section of an abandoned rail corridor. Although the bill would not have a major impact on the Pumpkinvine, it does "muddy the waters" regarding the legal status of lines like the Pumpkinvine.

HB 1851 would allow an adjacent property owner to claim the right of way along their property by filing an affidavit with the clerk of the circuit court. A similar law was declared unconstitutional in U.S. District Court in South Bend in 1989 and in U.S. District Court in Chicago in February 1992, so it will probably be declared unconstitutional again.

But between the time when the law might be passed and it is declared unconstitutional, adjacent land owners could cause a lot of mischief to abandoned corridors by acting like they owned it. The bill is now in a Senate committee.

Take a moment to write a letter to Elkhart County State Senator Marvin Reigsecker letting him know that you oppose HB 1851. Suggest instead that he support HB 1670 that has the support of the Indiana Park and Recreation Association and rail-trail advocates. HB 1670 amends the state rail preservation law to permit the acquisition of rail rights of way for preservation or conversion to trails. His address is State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

You could let the supporters of HB 1670 know of your letter by sending a copy to Rita Hamm, Director, Crawfordsville Park and Recreation Dept., 501 West Pike St., Crawfordsville, IN 47933. She is the head of the Indiana Park and Recreation Association. Phone 317-364-5179.

ISTEA conference charts a new course

by John Yoder

The Interstate age is over; the Federal government has made a U-turn in its transportation policy. That's the message of the conference, "Transportation Planning for Liveable Communities," I attended in St Louis, Feb. 5-6. The conference interpreted the new federal highway program, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

Instead of pursuing a transportation policy that gives priority to interstate highways, ISTEA commits the federal government to an era of "balanced investment in transportation, which better reflects the social, environmental, and energy goals of the nation."

That commitment makes funds available for many transportation options, like bicycle and pedestrian projects. Indiana will have $76.7 million available over the next six years for such "transportation-enhancements."

The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail would be eligible for these funds, if local government officials would include it in their transportation plans. It's our job to help them understand the significance of this legislation for projects like the Pumpkinvine.

A wonderful ride – close to home

by Ginger Marcinkowski

Not over a two hour ride from Elkhart, lies a pretty little city that comes to life in the spring as the tulips begin their show of grandeur. Holland, Mich., a small-scale duplicate of its European counterpart, has not only copied its springtime flower fantasy that draws thousands of visitors in April, but has also copied its love for the outdoors by incorporating paved bike and pedestrian trails. These six-foot-wide trails run for miles through the community, making it a wonderful family place in the summer.

Park your car at the Holland State Park and following the trail along the coastline, north. The trail meanders past small parks, such as Tunnel Park, and Kirk Park where one can stop to enjoy both a water break and the lake at the same time. The Trail offers a scenic ride past rolling hills, pathside picnic tables and shade trees. If time allows, plan an overnight in Grand Haven where the trail heads. It's 18 miles from Holland State Park to Grand Haven -- a great day's ride for the hearty.

The trail is accessible for wheelchairs, rollerbladers and strollers as well, making this a great area for the whole family to enjoy! For a taste of what we have to look forward to -- head to Holland.

Pledges needed now

Our appraisal of the Pumpkinvine corridor is complete, and soon we will be making an offer to Penn Central for purchase of the Pumpkinvine corridor. Once we have agreed on a price, we will need the funds to purchase the land. Our option with Penn Central expires June 3. **We need your pledges now.**

Take a moment to fill out the enclosed pledge form and send it to Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail, Box 392, Goshen, IN 46526. It's our chance to make a difference in the quality of life in northern Indiana for generations to come.

Friends of
The Pumpkinvine Nature Trail
Box 392 • Goshen, IN 46526

Address correction requested

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