



Volume 16 Issue 5

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

August/September 2011

[Congratulations, Tom, on 100,000 miles](#)

By Rick Hess, Photo's by Arlene Ormsby

Tom Harvey is a regular fixture on the trail. Everyone seems to know him. Although he rides a bike, he knows the joggers, hikers, horseback riders, and even many of the fishermen and



kayakers. He goes out of his way to greet both regular trail users and people who are there for the first time. He is always ready to help out when someone has a flat tire or other problem. He is the trail's unofficial "ambassador."

Recently, Tom accomplished a significant milestone that no one else will

likely ever match. He has ridden more than 100,000 miles on the Lower Trail. That's right, *100,000* miles. Tom has ridden regularly for many years, but, for more than 3 years, he has ridden somewhere every day. When the snow is too deep to use the trail, Tom rides the plowed streets near his home or along the highway. Several people have reported seeing him along Route 22 in the dead of winter with icicles hanging from his mustache. He has ridden more than 240,000 miles over his lifetime to date and has done the MS ride in Cherry Hill, NJ, for 28 years.

In addition to using the trail, Tom helps to maintain it. He has been on the maintenance crew for many years. Most everyone has seen him mowing with his trusty old "Yazoo." He and that



machine seem to have been around forever and are a perfect fit. Like many volunteers, he has quietly just found things that need doing on the trail and does them, such as waterproofing benches and bridges, organizing events such as this year's 1st Annual 4th of July parade on the trail, (see picture on page 3) and making and installing bird houses. He is the "eyes and ears" of the trail for the maintenance team. When he finds problems on the trail, he takes action to get them resolved.

Tom is a friend, a mentor, and inspiration to us all.

TREE OF THE MONTH: DEVIL'S WALKING STICK

By Dave Despot



Devil's walking stick *Aralia spinosa* is a large shrub or small tree, often growing to a height of 10 to 20 feet in central Pennsylvania -- much taller in the southern part of its range. The species prefers disturbed sites and often establishes after land is cleared by excavation, grading, fire or a timber cut. The native range

of this species includes much of the southeastern United States -- from Florida west to Texas and north to Pennsylvania.

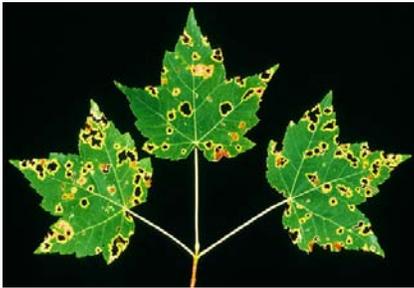
Devil's walking stick is usually found as an upright stem topped with a few branches, creating an almost palm tree-like appearance. Often the stems may be found in clusters formed by root sprouting. The bark and twigs are covered with stout prickles.

Leaves are alternate, compound (sometimes double or 3 times compound), with dark green upper surfaces and light green undersides. Leaves may be up to 3 feet long and 2 feet wide, with individual leaflets up to 3 inches long. When the massive leaves drop in the fall, the tree transforms to a single stem, often with no lateral branches. Most of the material that appeared to be lateral branching was actually part of the compound leaves. The leaf scars, formed where the large

clasping bases of the petioles were attached, almost encircle the branch. Flowers are umbels, creamy white in color, and borne in July and August at the top of the tree. The fruit is a berry-like drupe, black in color, juicy, with a 5-angled shape and thin flesh.

Another common name for devil's walking stick is Hercules-club. This proves confusing at times because another tree, southern prickly-ash, is also called Hercules-club.

MAPLE TAR SPOT:



A number of readers have emailed questions pertaining to "yellow-black" spots they have seen on the maple trees this summer.

These spots are known as Maple Tar-Spot. Maple Tar-Spot is a fungus that attacks "woody plants". It was originally found in Europe. In the 1940's it was then found in Ohio but remained scarce. In the 1980's outbreaks were identified in New York State and it has now become common in the northeastern United States. It occurs wherever maples grow in moist environments. (This wet spring aided greatly to its spread).

The fungus appears as yellow spots in the late spring to early summer. Spots do not appear on the leaves until they have reached their full size. Black stromata then develop on the yellow spots in mid to late summer. If the leaves become too polluted with multiple tar-spot lesions, they will wither and drop prematurely. Maples, especially Norway Maples, are very susceptible to this fungus, but tar-spot rarely threatens the general health of the tree.

WILDFLOWER WATCH: DAISY FLEABANE

By Bob Richers

This common yet miniature Daisy is present along most of the area rail trails from June thru August. "Daisy" Fleabane is actually a member of the Aster family which usually makes an appearance in the early autumn months. The name "fleabane" came from the mistaken notion made by our ancestors that the dried

plant repelled fleas. The cut flowers do add a nice touch to a summertime wild flower bouquet.



The plant can grow to three feet tall and thrives in direct sunlight. The half-inch flower consists of yellow disk florets surrounded by 40 to 100 white ray florets. Both the ray and disk florets can set fertile seeds without cross pollination. The plant can continue to bloom for several months.

This flower is visited by the smaller bees such as the Little Carpenter, Nomadine, Carder, Green Metallic and Plasterer bees. The caterpillars of the Lynx Flower Moth eat the buds and flower heads. Numerous flies, small butterflies, wasps and beetles can also be found on the Fleabane livestock. Deer, rabbits and groundhogs all dine on the foliage and flower. The Fleabane plays an important role in the functioning of the ecological system, with possibly the exception of flea control!

SUNDAY HUNTING

By: Bob Richers

The issue of Sunday hunting is being considered again for Pennsylvania. The argument of "Almighty Dollars" generated is the ever driving source of this latest campaign. The continued attack on "outdated" Blue Laws and even the continued expansion of legalized gambling used the same monetary logic. With these additional revenue sources, are we any better off? Sunday was once a day of rest. This one day when families spend quality time together has slowly been replaced with the hustle and bustle of getting ahead.

In 2003 the Pennsylvania Game Commission severely limited access to State Game Lands by equestrians and bicyclists. This change was a result of erosion to remote trails and riders disturbing hunters. Now only designated routes listed for each separate Game Land remain open for riding. Access is limited to late January through April. During Spring Turkey season, riding is permitted one hour after the morning hunting hour's end. Now that the last weeks of turkey hunting have been extended until dusk, riding is out. Biking from June until late September is still permitted as are Sundays from archery season until the end of December.

If Sunday hunting passes, the chance for riders to enjoy the fall foliage on State Game Lands will become history. Established rail trails going through game lands should not be affected. Of course prudent riders should wear orange during hunting season in those areas. Trails adjoining rail trails (example: rail beds in Games Lands connecting the Bells Gap and Six-Through-Ten Rail Trails) may be affected.

Another issue to consider with Sunday hunting is that Pa. Game Wardens are unionized employees, limited to forty hour work weeks. One additional day for hunting will further stretch patrol coverage. Unpaid volunteer deputies will be asked to do even more.

Aside from the biking issue, let's consider the agricultural response to Sunday hunting. The American farm is a family operated multigenerational business operation. These folks often work from dawn until dusk. Family values still run strong on the farm. Attending Sunday church services continues with most farm families. Compare a farm to a giant five hundred acre hardware store. The farmer needs the control

of who is entering and hunting on his property. Gates need to remain closed as hunters move about the farm. Livestock and property needs protected from random shooting and safety zone violations. Planted fields do not need to be trampled on, nor does the farmer want to see a hunter smoking in a dry grain field.

When the farm family attends church, or other Sunday community or family events, there is no one at home tending the "store." Farmers should not have to, and will not operate under these conditions.

Sunday hunting will further limit bike riding in Pennsylvania. It will also result in more farms being posted to "No Hunting." For those folks who only worship the dollar what do you think this will cost? Is it really worth it?

Authors note; My Sunday consists of attending church services, where I sing in the choir, and family bike ride after a light brunch. I also look forward to this upcoming hunting season, my 46th.

VOLUNTEERING HIS TIME:



Dick Landis has spent his spare time this summer volunteering to help maintain the benches along the trail. If you see Dick or his wife Ginny along the trail, stop and thank them for their time and effort.

SYMPATHIES:

Rails to Trails extends deepest sympathies to the Kotala and Campion family on the tragic, untimely death of Staff Sgt. Francis "Frank" Campion III. Frank was the fiancée of Helena Kotala. Helena is the daughter of board member Dr. Stan Kotala.

Frank was an Army National Guard Special Forces paratrooper on a three week training assignment in Helena Montana. He died as a result of a parachuting accident. Frank graduated from Hollidaysburg High school, following high school he graduated from Penn State with a degree in environmental studies. He then went on to be a much decorated military Staff Sergeant, receiving many military awards. As well as his love of parachuting, he was a man who enjoyed his family and loved the outdoors. He loved hiking, backpacking, canoeing, rock climbing, traveling, volunteering in Haiti, spending time on the shooting range, and most of all, seeing the world from the sky, parachuting as a special forces paratrooper. It should also be noted that the Bells Gap Trail was one of Frank's favorite places.

Our sympathies go out to Helena Kotala, Frank's family and Stan & Alice Kotala. Men like Staff Sgt. Francis Campion III leave a very large void to fill in this world.

1ST EVER 4TH OF JULY PARADE:



Nelson Horton, on his horse Raven lead trail cyclists decorated in USA red, white & blue colors on the first of hopefully many 4th of July parades on the Lower Trail in the future.

UP COMING EVENTS:

Sunday August 14th, Tom Snyder Ride, Leisurely ride begins at the Grannas Station. Come ride along and remember one of our great volunteers. Tom not only volunteered for Rails to Trails but many other community organizations. Larry Bilotto ride leader. Ride will leave from the Grannas Station Trailhead at 2 PM. For more information email larstrek@gmail.com

Sunday September 11th, Big Brothers Big Sisters will host the 5K Race and Walk Race begins at the Alfarata Trail Head. More information will be posted.

If you'd like to schedule an event, or if you have questions about an event, please call Rails-to-Trails event coordinator Stan Kotala at 814-946-8840 or email him at cwiba@keyconn.net.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (____)-_____

E-mail _____

_____ New Membership _____ Renewal

_____ Individual \$15.00

_____ Family \$20.00

_____ Supporting \$50.00

_____ Group \$75.00

I am interested in:

_____ Horses _____ Hiking

_____ Heritage _____ Bicycling

_____ Nature Study _____ Jogging

_____ Other _____

I would like to help by volunteering for:

Make checks payable to:

Rails-to-Trails of Central PA Inc.
PO Box 592, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814)-832-2400
www.rttcpa.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday August 9th
Sunday August 14th

Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station
The Tom Snyder Memorial Ride, 2 PM at the Grannas Station; come enjoy the trail and remember one of our fantastic volunteers.

Tuesday September 13th

Monthly Board Meeting, 7 PM at the Grannas Station

More details on all events on page 3 of the *Trekker*

All are invited to the monthly meetings.

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT

This newsletter is mailed 3rd Class Bulk Mail. The Post Office will not forward 3rd Class Bulk Mail. If anything about your address changes, Route Number, Street Numbers, or Zip code, the Trail Trekker will not be forwarded to you. Please keep Rails-to-Trails informed of any address changes by using a post office change of address card or dropping us a note at the following address. Remember, if your mailing address is Highlighted, your membership is about to expire. Please renew quickly and continue to support Rails-to-Trails. Thank You!

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