



Volume 20 Issue 4

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

July/August 2015

SYMPATHIES, PRAYERS AND CONCERNS:

Our sympathies, prayers and concerns go out to the small town of Williamsburg, the original starting point of the Lower Trail on the Blair County side and now the heart of the trail. On May 23rd of this year, tragedy struck this small town. A terrible car accident killed two of their young adults, Joshua Ray and Allison Edwards, and seriously injured two other young men, Kurt Detwiler and Elijah Fay. This is a town where everyone knows everyone so this accident impacted everyone including our rail-trail family. Allison Edwards' family and extended family have been involved with the trail since the early 1990's. Her aunt and uncle, Ed and Regina Patterson have been long time volunteers, board members and past president of the organization. Her grandfather, Merle Chamberlain, has been a long time maintenance volunteer. When you ride the trail and enjoy riding through the covered bridge at Mt. Etna, you can look up and see the name "Lorraine" on that bridge. That honors Allison's grandmother. Merle and his family built the covered bridge in her memory. Allie herself, as a little girl, drew the winning tickets for our spring gathering raffle for many years. As she grew up, she ran the John Healy Memorial 5K race many many times. Allie was quite an athlete, playing basketball for Williamsburg and Penn State Altoona. She was an all-around great girl.

Williamsburg will be celebrating its 225th Anniversary this summer. As part of the healing process, they are planning to hold a 5k race /2 mile walk for Allison calling it "**Laces for Alli.**". This event will be held at the close of the 225th Anniversary, **July 26th at 4 PM.** The 5K race / 2 mile walk will begin at the Williamsburg Trialhead. If you would like more information on this event or would like to help out, you may contact Valerie Prough at valbg@embarkmail.com

Please keep Williamsburg and the families impacted by this tragic accident in your prayers as they mourn the loss of two young lives and the long recovery of the two young men.

RAFFLE AND SPRING GATHERING:

Thank you to one and all who came to the Spring Gathering. The weather was great, food fantastic and a good time was had by all. A very special thank you to Sarah and Ron Gonsman, Mary Emeigh, and Bruce and Pam Sheehe, who did all the prep work, setting up, hauling the grill and doing all the cooking and serving and clean-up. These individual deserve a great thank you, for without them, there would not have been a gathering.

Following the picnic, the drawing for the winners of our yearly raffle was held. This year's winners were:

- 1st place: Catherine Sayenga from Edinboro PA
Prize \$200 gift certificate from Spokes N Skis
- 2nd place: Kevin Pritchett of Bellwood PA
Prize \$100 gift Certificate from Hoss's
- 3rd place: Sylvia Stack of Huntingdon PA
Prize \$100 Dick's Sporting Goods gift certificate
- 4th place: Megan Arment of Intercourse PA
Prize: \$75 Martins Convenience Store gift certificate
- 5th place: G. Pannebaker of Port Matilda PA
\$60 Field and Stream gift certificate
- 6th place: Carol Saylor of Hollidaysburg PA
\$50 value outdoor goods from Rothrock Outfitters
- 7th place: Katheryn Longenecker of Martinsburg PA
\$25 gift certificate from Black Dog Café'
- 8th place: Beth Brenneman of Williamsburg PA
\$25 gift certificate from Black Dog Café'

Of all of the 8 winners, only one purchased her own tickets. Seven of the winning tickets were sold by members and two of those seven tickets were sold by our very own, never been defeated, top ticket sales person, **Tom Fisher.** Tom out-did himself again this year, selling 510 tickets. We owe thanks, not only to Tom, but to all our Rail Trail members who helped to make this year's raffle a success. This raffle, as well as the proceeds from the John Healy Memorial 5K race, are what make up most of our yearly operating budget. So thank you so very much.

Now with those thanks said, the raffle and gathering would not have happened without the generosity of **Spokes-N-Skis, Hoss's, Blair Bicycle Club, Rothrock Outfitters, Black Dog Café and Holland Brother's Meats.** These businesses have been very supportive of Rails to Trails and we hope that when you are out shopping, you return the favor and support the BBC and these businesses.

GRANNAS STATION PROGRAMS:

Who came down that trail? Find out this summer:



We are proud to present this summer's programs. Peggy Goodman has put together a series of programs dealing with the history of the trail and all the related aspects that make it

what it is today. Speakers will include: a professional archaeologist, a local historian, several expert naturalists, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, a noted local railroad enthusiast and a local ecologist.

June 14th, American Indians
June 28th, City Folks
July 12th, Hitchhikers
July 26th, Caddis flies, crayfish and pollywogs
August 9th, Snakes and turtles, toads and frogs
August 23rd, Bats
September 13th, Steam locomotives
September 27th, Sycamores, maples, oaks and hickories

All programs will be held at the Grannas Station at 2 PM the date of the program unless otherwise noted. The July 26th program, however, will be held at the Flowing Spring Trailhead at 2 PM. These free programs are for all to come to enjoy and learn. Please see the insert for the full description of the programs, visit our website at www.rttcpa.org, or call 832-2400 and someone will return your call. We hope to see you there.

WHAT IS THE LOWER TRAIL GOOD FOR?

When you think of attractions to visit, how many have such a number of diverse options as a rail trail?

In this month's newsletter, I want to focus on **Boating**. Just pick up any sporting goods store advertising flyer and you will see kayaks and canoes advertised. Over the past number of years, canoeing and especially kayaking have become extremely popular. One of the main reasons is that a number of our rivers have become more accessible. The Lower Trail has a number of river access points. Kayaking is an easy sport to catch on to, the water does not have to be deep (which as the summer goes on and the river levels fall is a good thing,) and the vessels are light and easy to transport. Just remember to always wear your PFD, (personal floatation devise). Canoeing / kayaking is a wonderfully relaxing way to enjoy the trail. If you get a chance, plan to try it.

TREE OF THE MONTH: HONEY LOCUST

By Dave Despot



Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) is a medium sized tree (60 to 100 ft.,) native to the central and eastern United States. Honey locust trees prefer moist bottomland or upland sites with soils of limestone origin. Native honey locust trees have large branched thorns on their trunks and branches while honey locust trees grown for landscaping are thornless. When I was first learning to identify trees, I studied mainly landscape specimens. When I met my first "wild" honey locust on the mall of the campus of Saint Francis University in Loretto, I had no idea what it was. I referred to my copy of the *Illustrated Book of Trees* by William Carey Grimm and learned about the stiff branched thorns.

Leaves are pinnately compound with tiny bright green leaflets 1/2 to 1 1/4 inch in length edged with tiny teeth on the margins. One of the advantages of honey locust trees in ornamental settings is that the leaflets are so small that they blow away or are easily

mulched into the turf in the fall. The trees flower with strongly scented, cream colored blossoms in late spring. The blossom clusters emerge from the base of the leaf axils. Fruits are flat, twisted pods that mature in autumn with a deep purple-brown color. Bark is smooth on young stems (olive green to brown) with obvious lenticels, becoming dark brown to black with deep longitudinal ridges and valleys as the stems mature. The name honey locust comes from the sweet pulp inside the pod which was reportedly used by Native Americans for food. Some sources list all parts of the honey locust plant as toxic to humans. The seed pods are readily consumed by mammals and birds.



The Latin name of this tree reflects the formidable thorns growing out of the trunk and branches. The Latin word triacanthos means three branched thorns. While honey locust is commonly used as an ornamental tree in the north eastern United States, it is considered an invasive weed in other regions of the world.

Look for a honey locust tree on your next trip to the forest – or the park. You are likely to find one in either place.

WILD FLOWER WATCH: AMERICAN GINSENG

BY Bob Richers



The leaves of Ginseng are green and are comprised of 3 to 5 leaflets. This perennial plant emerges early in the spring. The flowers produced are in tiny clusters of green-white or yellow-green. After flowering red berries are produced. The plants grow to two feet tall and can last over 30 years. New plants will produce a single prong, but as the roots begin to develop mutable prongs appear. A plant with 3 prongs and red berries is considered to be 5 years old and can be harvested. Good quality Ginseng can be worth several hundred dollars or more per pound.

American Ginseng is native to the eastern hardwood forests of United States and Canada, where it was traditionally used by the Native American Tribes. Today, Ginseng is the world's most widely used medical plant. American Ginseng's sister Asian Ginseng has been used in China for over 5000 years and due to over harvesting is considered quite rare in the wild. Since it was first discovered in 1716, Ginseng harvested in America has been exported to China.

Today, American ginseng is listed by the Convention of International Trade as an endangered species. It's currently illegal to harvest Ginseng in Canada. In the United States, there are various regulations concerning the gathering of the plant.

There are 19 states that have regulations on harvesting Ginseng. Pennsylvania prohibits harvesting Ginseng on any state or federal lands. A permit is not required to collect the plant, but a \$50 vulnerable plant license is needed for buying ginseng and a record with the name, address and county where harvested must be maintained. Permission must be obtained to gather Ginseng from the land owner.

When Ginseng is harvested, the root is removed which ends the potential of the plant to produce seeds and increase the

population. Pennsylvania regulations state that the plants must have 3 prongs of 5 leaflets each and the berries must be red and then buried in the vicinity of the harvesting site. This will maintain continued crops for future harvesting. The picking season begins on September 1st and lasts to November 30th. If you harvest this plant, take the time to protect a sustainable population.

Unfortunately, there is quite an illegal market for Ginseng in this country. Any plants, regardless of age, are being sold to a greedy Asian market. The same people out there poaching deer or producing illegal drugs on public lands will try to make a buck stealing Ginseng. If you, as a land owner, are approached by a person honest enough to ask for permission to pick Ginseng from your land, consider yourself lucky, and try to work out a deal.

The same people who demand Ginseng have no scruples. They would kill every last elephant for their ivory or black rhinos for their horns. Even in this country, the black bear populations are declining in the Smokey Mountains because Asia craves certain organs. Environmental laws mean nothing as a few become super rich. I consider any plant or animal lost to extinction through human greed as a crime against humanity.

HOLLIDAYSBURG AREA SENIORS:



On May 13th through the 15th, Rails to Trails had approximately 50 Hollidaysburg Area High School seniors volunteering their time to spruce up and fix up the trail for the upcoming summer season. They worked on a number of projects, such as fixing the split rail fencing, painting our maintenance sheds, replacing posts, installing a few new benches and general clean up. We would like to thank these students for helping out on the trail. We also owe a great deal of thanks to Mike Rawlings, their teacher-advisor. Also, thanks to trail members Ed Donahoe and Adam Grow who volunteered their time setting up the projects, getting all the materials and overseeing all the work done.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

Undated. "Thank You, grass cutters. You are part of the "Greatest Generation. God Bless you all"

5/10/2015. "Happy Mom's Day! A good day to ride trail."

5/20/2015. "10 miles walking - cloudy and cool - great day. Dave Thompson and Rob Givler"

5/20/5-2015. "Biked 20 miles today. Cloudy, 67 degrees = perfect! Momma's Day Out!! Kim and Patty"

5/23/2015. "Gati came back for Lackland AFB and is riding with his friend in college, Beatty."

5/23/2015. First time on the trail, and it is amazing!!

5/23/2015. "Baptist youth bike hike. Perfect day to ride."

5/25/2015. "Road ride from Hollidaysburg to Altoona, up the Kettle, down through Sinking Valley, on to 453 to Alfarata. Got on Lower Trail to Flowing Springs, down to Juniata Valley Road, and back to Hollidaysburg. 55 miles total."

5/25/2015. "Saw big black snake basking in sun on trail by the chickens! Love this place. Shawn and Aaron."

MRS. TURTLE:

Member Rick Hess captured this picture along the trail in early May. This Snapping Turtle made her way up along the trail to dig a hole to deposit her eggs. If you come across any sites of buried turtle eggs, please do not disturb them. This female is depositing anywhere from 20 to 60 eggs. That may seem like a lot to you but maybe only 1 % of the eggs that hatch will reach maturity.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Please see the insert for the dates and details of our Summer Speakers Series.

July 26th: "Laces for Alli", 5k race / 2mile walk 4PM

August 29th: 7 PM Possum Ride Williamsburg Trailhead. Rain date September 5th.

NOTE: There is NO Monthly Board Meeting scheduled for July. The next Board meeting will be August 11th. At 7 PM.

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:
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday June 28th	City Folks , Grannas Station 2 PM
Sunday July 12th	Hitchhikers , Grannas Station 2 PM
Sunday July 26th	Caddis flies, crayfish and pollywogs , 2 PM Flowing Spring Trailhead
Sunday August 9th	Snakes and turtles, toads and frogs , Grannas Station 2 PM
Tuesday August 11th	Monthly Board Meeting 7 PM at the Grannas Station
Sunday August 23rd	Bats , 2PM at the Grannas Station
Saturday August 29th	Possum Ride on the Trail , 7 PM starting at the Williamsburg Trailhead.

More details on all events see the insert of the *Trekker* or visit our Web site at www.RTTCPA.org
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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