



Volume 16 Issue 7

Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

December 2011

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



We have worked hard throughout the year, mowing, cutting trees, attending meetings, problem solving, the list could go on and on but it is time to take a break. We invite you to our annual Holiday Gathering.

HOLIDAY GATHERING/COMMUNITY NIGHT MONDAY DECEMBER 5th

We are excited to team up with Hoss's Steak and Sea House to raise money for a very worthy cause. Please consider visiting the Hoss's in Duncansville on Monday December 5th to aid us in raising money to benefit Rails to Trails of Central Pennsylvania Inc. You may eat at the Hoss's anytime throughout the day, or you may wish to wait until dinner. If you wait until dinner, you may then come over to the Hoss's Corporate Offices and hear this year's speaker Dave Hurst for a look at the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains

Fill your stomachs and support Rails-to-Trails at the same time. This year's gathering will be **Monday evening, December 5th**. All you have to do is clip and present the coupon when ordering. Hoss's will then donate 20% of the sales for all coupons presented. (The coupon is on page 3 of the *Trekker*.) Following your meal, you are invited over to Hoss's Corporate Offices, (REAR ENTERANCE), for the program, beginning at 7 PM.

About this years program:

This year we are very fortunate to have Dave Hurst as a speaker. Dave is a regional-heritage author and newspaper columnist. He has been writing about the cultural and natural heritage of Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains for more than 25 years, since his days as a reporter, first for **WTAJ-TV** in Altoona and then for the **Tribune-Democrat** in Johnstown. He was the founder and original editor of *Westsylvania* magazine.

Since 2003 he has published a syndicated newspaper column that looks at our regional heritage and ways that readers can

experience it for themselves. In 2009 The History Press of Charleston, SC published a collection of Dave's historical essays in a book titled "*Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains: the First Frontier.*"

Believing that he should practice what he preaches, Dave is an active bicyclist, kayaker, hiker and camper, who makes it a point to enjoy the sites, events and activities about which he writes.

Plan to come hear Dave speak about the great cultural and natural heritage of our area, on **Monday, December 5th 2011**. We will be meeting at the **Hoss's Corporate Office**, located on Patchway Drive in Duncansville, (the office is just behind Marzoni's Restaurant, between Martins Grocery Store Plaza and the Comfort Inn) Park on the side or back of the building and come in the **REAR** entrance. Plan to come around 7 PM; there will be light refreshments and holiday treats. We hope to start Dave's program at approximately 7:15.

This should be a very good program. Please plan to attend and bring a friend.

Your coupon with the group number is on page three of the *Trekker*, bottom right hand corner.

The Frank Campion Memorial Hike:



On Sunday, October 30 Helena Kotala led 22 hikers on the Frank Campion Memorial Hike, a 6-mile snowy downhill hike on the Bell's Gap Rail Trail. This hike honored Staff Sgt. Francis Campion who died in a military training accident this past summer, and who enjoyed the Bell's Gap Rail Trail. An article written by Helena Kotala about this trail is at <http://pennsylvania.sierraclub.org/moshannon/OTT/OTT10-03BellsGapTr.htm>

BELLS GAP RAIL TRAIL NEWS:

We are into the winter season already and we all say to each other, "Where has the year gone?" Each season brings its own beauty to the trail and winter is no exception. If you haven't experienced a walk on the trail during the winter months, you are missing a beautiful experience, especially after a new snowfall. When you get there early in the morning after a fresh snowfall and are the first one on the trail, you have entered a winter wonderland. There are only tracks from the little critters and usually a sighting of a bunny or two that you could follow right to his burrow just like Alice in Wonderland! The trees are snow covered and if you stand very still and listen, it seems as if the sky and heavens are talking to you. If you aren't into long walks, the first bench is only 1/8 mile up the trail. Just sit and listen and I guarantee your day or week will be better.

We are planning our annual yard sale again in the spring, so plan on joining us in the Legion parking lot. Set up a table of your own for a small fee or just come to shop and hang out. Each year it gets bigger so if you are interested in getting a space, call 742-7344 to reserve your spot now.

TREE OF THE MONTH: COMMON ELDERBERRY

By Dave Despot



Common Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) is a shrub or small tree (4 to 11 feet high) native to the eastern United States. Elderberry is an interesting plant that is common in central Pennsylvania. This fast growing species prefers

wet areas and is often found along forest edges, fencerows, and roadsides. Elderberry plants sprout readily from roots, forming clusters or colonies where conditions are favorable.

Leaves are large (4 to 11 inches), opposite, compound, with 5 to 7 dark green, coarse-toothed leaflets, that turn to a yellow-green fall color. Bark is light brown and smooth, with raised bumps, becoming fissured with age. Twigs are green to gray with ringed nodes and white colored pith. White flowers are borne in upright flat topped clusters during the late spring and early summer. Fruit are 1/8 to 1/4 inch in diameter, purple to black in color, ripening in September.



The berries are readily eaten by birds and mammals. People collect berries to make jellies, pies, and wine. The literature contains various references to the toxicity of raw plant parts to humans, especially children. Unripe berries as well as stems, roots, and leaves are considered poisonous.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Saturday, November 26: Post-Thanksgiving Hike - Dr. Stan Kotala will lead a 6-mile hike along the Lower Trail from Mt. Etna to Williamsburg. Meet at the Lower Trail Williamsburg Trailhead at noon. See a map at http://www.rtcpa.org/downloads/Lower_map_800x619.jpg. There will be a shuttle. Contact Dr. Stan Kotala at 946-8840 ccwiba@keyconn.net for more information.

Monday, December 5th: Holiday Gathering

On Monday, December 5th at 7 PM, Rails to Trails will hold its annual Holiday Gathering at the Hoss's Corporate Office Conference Room. This year's guest speaker will be Dave Hurst, noted newspaper columnist and trail advocate. Holiday cookies and light refreshments will be served.

Saturday, December 17: Holiday Hike around the Lake

Dr. Stan Kotala will lead a 6-mile hike around Canoe Lake. Meet at the Canoe Creek State Park beach pavilion at noon. Contact Dr. Stan Kotala at 946-8840; ccwiba@keyconn.net for more information.

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

ELECTION TIME AGAIN:



Each January we must elect five members to our Board of Directors. Rails-to-Trails of Central Pa Inc. is managed by 15 elected members in good standing in the corporation. Board members serve a three year commitment with five members being elected each year.

The Board members whose terms are up this year are: Vickie Brea, Ed Donahoe, Nelson Horton, Ethan Imhoff, and Stan Kotala. Vickie has taken charge of memberships and the annual membership drive; Ed and Ethan have been instrumental on a number of committees, (such as the Rail Trail Extension from Flowing Spring to the Six through Ten Trail and developing our governmental-required Power Driven Mobility Devices Policy, just to name a few); Nelson has been our Maintenance Coordinator overseeing all the mowing and tree cutting volunteers, equipment, and many more trail related tasks, and Stan has taken charge of scheduling and coordinating the calendar of events as well as leading many of our guided hikes. These members have all served a number of years on the board and each has agreed to put his name on the ballot to serve another 3 year term. They have all done a fantastic job and are a great asset to the organization. With that said, I do not believe any one of these individuals would turn down others wishing to become more involved in the organization by helping them in the committees on which they serve. Please consider volunteering your time to the Rails to Trails in the coming year.

If you would like to run for a term on the board or know of someone you would like to nominate, they must be able to

fulfill the requirements set forth in the by-laws, which are as follows: "Article III states: A. Responsibilities: The Ability of the Organization to successfully accomplish its purpose as defined in Article II, is contingent on the active interest and participation of its Board Members. 1. This entails involvement in the planning, organization and carrying out of scheduled activities throughout the year. 2. Board members are encouraged and expected to attend scheduled meetings on a regular basis." To keep this organization strong and moving forward, it is vital that board members are able to fulfill the two objectives listed above.

If you feel you meet these criteria and are interested or know someone who is, please consider running for a position on the Board. Do not always assume someone else will do it. The Lower Trail is a GREAT trail but we need committed people to keep the organization strong. To nominate someone for the Board call Norma Horton at 814-669-4612, or email at nhorton1446@yahoo.com or Sarah Gonsman at 814-696-7244 or email at SGONSMAN@state.pa.us or Karl King at 814-940-1922 or email at kking@allegHENYridge.org

A SPECIAL THANK YOU from:



Nelson and Norma Horton would like to thank all of the dedicated volunteers that kept the Lower Trail in such great shape this year. They kept the grass mowed and the downed trees cut and off the trail, as well as other projects such as painting and maintaining the memorial benches and trimming weeds. These men and

women deserve many thanks for their hard work from those of us who use and enjoy this trail. We would never get such great reviews on our trail by its users without the hard work of the dedicated volunteers.

ON THANKSGIVING

May we all give thanks for those blessings that we rarely take the time to recognize:

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead, and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace...you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married...you are very rare, even in the USA.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful...you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

If you can read this, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

May we all join together and count our blessings.

It is our wish to you that everyone has a **Safe and Happy Holiday Season.**

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

Hoss's Steak & Sea House
&
Rails to Trails of Central PA Inc.

Coupon



GROUP # 14733



Monday December 5th, 2011

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday December 5th

Hoss's Meal Fund Raiser, clip the coupon on page 3 and present it at the Duncansville Hoss's restaurant on December 5th when ordering your meal and Rails to Trails receives 20% of your total check

Monday December 5th

Holiday Gathering: 7 PM at the Hoss's Corporate Office Conference Room, (rear entrance)

Saturday December 17th

Hike around the Lake: Noon at the Canoe Creek State Park beach pavilion.

Tuesday January 10th

Monthly Board Meeting and Election of Board Members and 2012 Officers: 7PM at the First United Methodist Church in Hollidaysburg.

More details on all events on pages 2 of the *Trekker*

All are invited to the monthly meetings.

No December Board of Directors meeting. See everyone in January.

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!

Rails-to-Trails of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.

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www.rttcpa.org



**RAILS-TO-TRAILS, INC.
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