



**HOLIDAY GATHERING: December 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

Come join fellow trail enthusiasts and learn more about the **Pike2Bike Trail** in Bedford and Fulton Counties. We are very pleased to have Mr. Don Schwartz, the Bedford County Planner, to come and talk about this unique trail.

The **Pike2Bike Trail** is an eight mile stretch of closed highway which was formerly part of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. You may ask what is so unique about an old abandoned highway...well not only is it very scenic, but it also includes not one but two tunnels through the mountains. One tunnel



is 3,500 feet in length. Please plan to attend and bring your family and friends out for a very enjoyable evening.

The Holiday Gathering will take place at **Hoss's Corporate Office** in Duncansville at **7 PM**. It is located just behind Marzoni's Restaurant on Patchway Drive and just beside the Comfort Inn. The entrance to the conference room is at the **REAR** of the building. Following the presentation there will be light refreshments and holiday cookies. We hope to see you there

**HOSS'S COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER:**



December 2<sup>nd</sup> is not only the Holiday Gathering, but also the day Rails to Trails is again partnering with Hoss's Community Fundraising Program. All you have to do is

clip the coupon from Page 3 of the *Trekker* and go to Hoss's on Patchway Drive in Duncansville. Present your coupon when ordering lunch or dinner and Hoss's will donate 20% of the cost of your group's meals to Rails to Trails. Now how easy is that? You get a great meal and help out Rails to Trails at the same time.

You can eat at any time during the day. If you plan to come to the Holiday Gathering, just allow enough time to eat and then come over to the Corporate Offices, (which are located just behind Marzoni's restaurant.) We will be using the REAR entrance at the back of the building.

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

The following messages were recently posted on the bulletin board at Mt. Etna:

9/10/13: "Mister and his Missy were here again! Our spot for a great walk."

The next message was posted by three young Amish men who were riding the trail on horseback.

"Keep up the awesome work. We love it back here in the woods. Israel Thomas Swarey, Gideon Noah Peachey, and Benuel Jacob Swarey."

10/12/13

"Our first time biking the trail. Awesome ride! Love it here! Thank the Lord for creating beautiful Pennsylvania. Brenda Nolt & daughters Hannah & Deborah."

10/27/13

"Saw ten turkey walking up the hillside next to the trail between mile 2 and 3, just east of here."

11/11/13

"Celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on 11/2/13 at Prince Gallitzin St. Park! Biking (here) on this beautiful Monday! We're still in Love after all these years! Denny and Debbi"

The bulletin board at Mt. Etna always is an interesting read. If you are on the trail, take time to stop and read or even post a note of your own. Who knows, maybe you will read it in the *Trail Trekker*.

**Valley's 3rd Annual Walk to School Day**

*By, Kerigan Ammerman JVHS Reporter*

It was time to put the car keys away, get out the sneakers and walk to school! Juniata Valley started off their third annual walk to school day on October 9. Over 150 people showed up for this event in the hopes of gaining more support in the efforts to extend the Lower Trail (Rails to Trails) from Alexandria to Petersburg and into Huntingdon, creating safer pathways to school. This was also a way to help promote environmentally friendly ways of transportation instead of using cars or buses.



The morning started off with groups at the Alexandria Fire Company and the Petersburg Fire Company ready to make the mile walk to the school. It was about a 30-minute walk until the two groups met to hold a small ceremony.

After the walk, participants gathered for refreshments and to hear speeches from various community members, including sophomore Laura Carper. "I encouraged everyone to be more physically active and to get out more," explained Carper. "I hope that soon we will have safer and better paths to the school that we can walk and bike on. With this event, I also wanted to show that the community worked together to help make the environment safer and hopefully in the future as well."

The project leader for walk to school day, JV junior Samantha Spayd, was also pleased to see everything went well. "I am glad everyone enjoyed themselves and are learning new ways to be active and help the environment," commented Spayd. "The support from everyone was great and setting up everything and organizing it all was so much fun."

JV sustainability club advisor Pam Grugan largely inspired Spayd. "Pam inspired me to take on this project for our community," explained Spayd. "She helped me to lead this project and showed me how to take charge of everything. I took the time to go to the County Commissioners' Office with Pam to get the approval. I also talked with our Principal, Michael Estep, while Pam made phone calls to everyone to volunteer for the walk."

To inspire students for this walk, Spayd even gave presentations to health classes while Carper made displays around the school with the posters J.C Blair Memorial Hospital provided for them. "The community support was really outstanding," stated Spayd.



In addition to having over 70 JV students and members of the JV faculty, administration and staff, participants of the walk came from various local areas. Participants included but were not limited to PA Senator John Eichelberger, PA Representative Mike Fleck, Huntingdon Visitors

Bureau Director Matt Price, mayors from surrounding boroughs, representatives from various Huntingdon county organizations and businesses, representatives from Juniata College, community members from Alexandria, Petersburg and Huntingdon and of course, the Altoona Curve mascots.

Please stay tuned for an upcoming article on continued efforts to extend the Lower Trail for a safe pathway to school!

*(This article was written by Kerigan Ammerman, a student at the Juniata Valley High School following the October 9<sup>th</sup> Walk to*

*School Day, which was a great success and supported by many Rails to Trails members.)*

## TREE OF THE MONTH: Spruce and Fir

*By Dave Despot*

The impending onset of winter and the soon to arrive Christmas season help conjure thoughts of evergreen trees. The symbolism surrounding evergreens relates to rebirth, the stamina needed to endure harsh conditions, and a connection with all life. Evergreens also symbolize the ability to remain fresh, optimistic, and radiant even in harsh conditions. Who says we can't learn something from trees? So, let's look at little more closely at two common evergreen species.



Spruce trees make up a genus (*Picea*) of large evergreen trees that are distributed widely across the northern temperate regions. There are about 35 species of spruce, many of which are native to eastern Asia. The needles are 4-sided (roll one between your fingers to test for this characteristic) and borne singly. Each needle is stiff, sharp, and attached to the twig with a raised woody peg called a sterigma. Spruce cones typically hang downward on the tree, have thin scales (making them flexible), are brown and woody when mature, and fall from the tree intact. A great test to determine if a tree belongs to the spruce genus goes something like this. Pick out a mature branch and grasp it firmly in the palm of your hand (like you are shaking hands with it). If you say ouch, you have just tested affirmatively for sharp, stiff needles and the tree is likely a spruce.



Fir trees comprise the genus *Abies*, a group of 30 to 40 species growing in the northern temperate climate around the world. Trees in this genus have smooth twigs (flat circular leaf scars), upright cones which disintegrate on the tree, and glossy flattened needles which resist rolling between your fingers. These needles -- soft, flexible and blunt tipped, will pass the handshake test and have you reaching for a second grasp. The branches feel pleasantly soft in the palm of your hand. Many of the fir species have silver shading on the underside of the needles prompting the British to use 'silver fir' as a common name for members of the species *Abies*. Some of the fir species, particularly Fraser fir, have outstanding needle retention, making them a favorite choice for Christmas trees.

Please accept my wishes for a wonderful Thanksgiving and a joyful Christmas.

## NEWS FROM THE BOARD:

The Board regretfully accepted the resignation of Dr. Stan Kotala from the Board of Directors at the November meeting. Stan has been a very active member of the Board for over the past 10 years. His special interest has been the habitat for all wildlife along the trail and all the trail's natural resources. All members saw his name in every newsletter for Stan chaired the



events committee, organizing the calendar of events and leading many of the hikes along the Lower and Bells Gap Trails. Due to continuing family commitments he felt it best to offer his resignation. We wish Stan and his family the best and know that, as time permits, he will again be down on the trail and leading hikes.

**JANUARY ELECTIONS:**



Each year in January, we must elect five members to the 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 being elected each year. The Board members whose terms are up this year are: Larry Bilotto, Sean Burke, Fred Ciocca, Karl King and Bob Richers. This year Larry Bilotto, Sean Burke, and Bob Richers have all decided, due to other very worthwhile commitments, not to seek another 3 year term on the Board. These men have all committed to stay active in the organization, for which we are very grateful. We wish them well as they continue volunteering in the community.

At the January elections, we will also be choosing someone to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Stan Kotala. Thus, we will be electing six individuals at the January meeting.

You may ask, "What does being a Board member entail?" Article III. A. of our by-laws states: "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, contact Norma Horton at 814-669-4612, or email her at [nhorton1446@yahoo.com](mailto:nhorton1446@yahoo.com); or email Ed Donahoe at [ejdonahoe@msn.com](mailto:ejdonahoe@msn.com), or Adam Grow at [aggrow@atlanticbb.net](mailto:aggrow@atlanticbb.net)

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS:**

Saturday November 30<sup>th</sup> – **Post-Thanksgiving Hike on the Lower Trail** – Dr. Alice Kotala will lead an easy 5 mile hike from Mt. Etna to Alfarata on the Lower Trail. Meet at the Alfarata Trailhead parking lot at 1 PM. For more information or questions you may contact Dr. Alice Kotala at 946-8840 or email at [cwiba@keyconn.net](mailto:cwiba@keyconn.net)

**Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup> Hoss's Community Fundraiser for Rails to Trails.**

**Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup> Holidy Gathering**, 7 PM at the Hoss's Corporate Office, Rear Entrance. Program by Don Schwartz on the Pike2Bike Trail.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

As we approach the Holiday Season and the close of another year, it is our hope that you take the time to enjoy your family and loved ones. Take the time to get out and enjoy all the beautiful sights and natural wonders we have around us. And most of all, have a safe and wonderful holiday.

Warmest Holiday Wishes from the Rails to Trails Family.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: (\_\_\_\_)-\_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

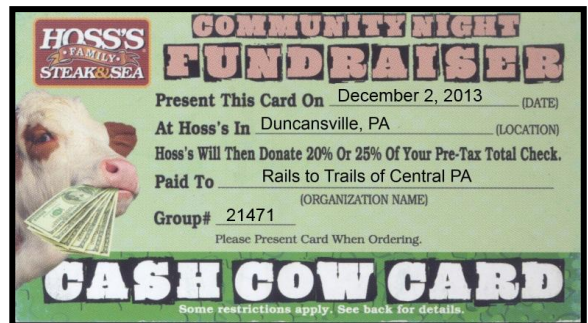
_____ New Membership	_____ Renewal
_____ Individual	\$15.00
_____ Family	\$20.00
_____ Supporting	\$50.00
_____ Group	\$75.00

I am interested in:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Horses  
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 \_\_\_\_\_ Nature Study  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hiking  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Bicycling  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Jogging

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](http://www.rttcpa.org)

**HOSS'S COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER COUPON**





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U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
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PERMIT NO. 66

*Or Current Resident.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Saturday November 30<sup>th</sup>** **Post Thanksgiving Hike**, 1 PM at the Alfarata Trailhead.  
**Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup>** **Hoss's Community Program Fund Raiser**, Duncansville Hoss's.  
**Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup>** **Holiday Gathering**, 7 PM Hoss's Corporate Office. Don Schwartz will have a presentation on the Pike2Bike Trail.  
**Tuesday January 14<sup>th</sup>** **Monthly Board Meeting and yearly elections**, 7 PM at the Grannas Station.

More details on all events on page 3 of the *Trekker* and on our Web site at [www.RTTCPA.org](http://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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