



Signals

*News and notes from the
Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association
Highland, NY 12528
www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net*

Volume 7 Number 2

Spring 2010

Breakfast at Black Creek and Annual Meeting

by Claire Costantino

To kick off the summer as we usually do on the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, we will be having our Annual Breakfast at the Black Creek beginning at 9AM on June 5th. This will also be the annual meeting for the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, which helps maintain the Rail Trail as well as events and programs that utilize the great setting of this ribbon of recreation that cuts through the hamlet of Highland.

The date, Saturday, June 5th corresponds to National Trails Day, a celebration of the hundreds of thousands of miles of trails all across the country. As you will see at the meeting, we in Highland have a lot to celebrate in our Rail Trail in the many developments that are taking place.

The Breakfast event will include the election of directors to the Board as well as updates on current and future Hudson Valley Rail Trail events. All

INSIDE: Trail Expansion, p. 3
"... a bold endeavor that will cost some \$3.2 million, all of it coming from federal stimulus money"

members whose dues are paid through June 30, 2010, will be eligible to cast their votes for the Board of Directors candidates. This year the following Directors are seeking election to a three year term: Ray Costantino, Lauriann Marion, Mary Phillips, Susan Van De Bogart and Suzanne Wirth.

At the meeting you will marvel at how much progress is being made with the Rail Trail. We will share with you a report on the construction of the eastward expansion and its connection to Walkway over the Hudson State Historic Park, the Walkway Loop, the Johnson-Iorio Park and the Franny Reese State Park. We will also give you an update about the future westward expansion to South Street (across from Lowe's on Route 299) that is in advanced design and planning stages.

You will also hear about our annual events such as the WinterFest that continue to draw ever increasing crowds. In addition you will get a glimpse at how our trail and facility at the Hudson Valley Depot is getting active use by local and other groups for fitness and fundraising as well as for the Learn-To-Run Program. At the meeting you will have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments. ♦

In This Issue

Breakfast at Black Creek.....	1
President's Message	2
Bridge Gone, Trail Cut in Two	2
Expansion East Moving Fast.....	3
WinterFest Warmest Ever	4
Rail Trail Odds and Ends.....	5
Events Schedule for 2010.....	5
A Beginner Runner's Tale.....	6

President's Message

I hope you mark your calendar for Saturday June 5th and attend the Annual Meeting and Breakfast on the Black Creek beginning at 9 AM.

Enjoying a continental breakfast alongside the Black Creek early on a June morning is an excellent way to spend some leisure time with friends and family. Hope you can join us.

WinterFest 2010 held on Saturday January 16th was a huge success thanks in part to the great weather we experienced and to all our many volunteers. A big thank you to all who helped make the day a great success.

Great News and Appreciation:

1) The eastward expansion of the rail trail is currently under construction. This will add an additional 1.28 miles as the trail continues from Commercial Avenue to its connection with Walkway. Construction is expected to be completed by early October 2010.

2) An additional parking area is being constructed near the Walkway entrance to the Trail just off Haviland Road. This will help relieve parking pressures for bridge users.

3) The westward expansion of the trail from Tony Williams Park to South Street is currently being designed. Just think another 3 miles of rail trail coming our way!

4) A big "THANK YOU" goes to our Founders for having the vision and the courage to make this dream a reality. We truly appreciate their efforts on behalf of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association. It would not have happened without them. Thank you: Ray Costantino, Everton Henriques and John Canino.

See you,

Claire

Claire R. Costantino, President
Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.



This iconic bridge over the Rail Trail is gone. While a new one is being constructed, the Rail Trail remains cut in two thru July or so.



Signals

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Eastward Expansion Is Ahead of Schedule

by *Rafael Díaz*

The Eastern expansion of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, which was covered in the last issue of *Signals* (Winter 2010, page 1), is well on its way. In fact it is ahead of schedule, so much so that the May 4th Ground Breaking Ceremony took place on a long stretch that already has its gravel base layer for later blacktopping; a patch of the gravel had to be pushed aside and filled with sand to allow for the ceremonial first shoveling. Barring some unforeseen circumstances, sometime in early October, you will be able to walk, run or bike from the existing Rail Trail all the way to the Walkway Over the Hudson.

The expansion is a bold endeavor that will cost some \$3.2 million, all of it coming from federal stimulus money under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that in large part was successfully earmarked by Congressman Maurice Hinchley who was part of the Ground Breaking Ceremony. Ray Costantino, Town Supervisor and one of the three Highland Rotary members who founded the Rail Trail (the other two were John Canino and Everton Henriques—the latter was one of the guest speakers at the ceremony) reported the great news for local taxpayers. Earlier, Ray had managed to get a Transportation Improvement Program grant under which the Town of Lloyd would have had to make a 20% match. The stimulus package now covers all of the construction costs, saving town taxpayers some \$600,000.

Smarts In Finding Funds

Such savvy securing of funds has been the name of the game for the Rail Trail since its very beginning. A small grant from the Hudson Valley Greenway



From Left to Right: Lloyd Council member Nancy Hammond, Congressman Maurice Hinchley, Ray Costantino, Rail Trail President Claire Costantino, Lloyd Council member Jeff Paladino and Everton Henriques, first president of the Rail Trail

helped get plans started in the late 1990s. Then there is the fiber optics story. When a fiber optics line was being laid out along the New York Thruway to meet increased cyber consumer demand, the Town of Lloyd was approached to have the optics spur cut over to Poughkeepsie via the Rail Trail. The initial offer for use of this right-of-way was \$10,000. Ray was a Town Council member at the time and bargained that amount upwards. Ray realized that the fiber optics company would save \$1 million in costs by not having to go around on highways. He managed to have the company raise the ante to a staggering \$400,000!

The Eastern Expansion adds 1.28 miles of paved 12 foot wide trail that stretches from the Commercial Avenue end of the present 2.5 mile long Rail Trail to the Walkway Over the Hudson. Strollers on the Walkway will be drawn hypnotically to the ribbon of trail that they see ahead of them as they cross into Highland. The new part of the trail is quite scenic. Immediately as you cross on to it from the Walkway you will pass through forest and be up on a low berm. You then will go under Mile Hill Road (a new bridge is being constructed over the trail) and be in a deep trench that goes under 9W and continues for a bit. There is a side ramp trail that will take you up to 9W where numerous food outlets lie. Then it will pass by the old Pratt Lumber Yard (most recently the site of Vintage Village) and cross over Vineyard Avenue on a pedestrian bridge and then run along the edge of the Hamlet of Highland and all the attractions there before linking with the existing trail. ♦



Everton Henriques presents Rail Trail painting to Ray Costantino; Rail Trail board members look on

Warmest Weather Ever At WinterFest 2010

by Claire Costantino

WinterFest goers are used to bundling up in multi-layers. But if they had done so at the WinterFest held this past January 16th they would have been mighty uncomfortable. It was the warmest such celebration ever. Instead of ankle deep in snow, we wallowed in mud. Instead of being wrapped up in scarves, we were almost down to shirt-sleeves.

The unusual January weather and the event's great reputation made for a record turnout in attendance of people who came to enjoy the day. Area food establishments provided 14 pots of chili this year. In addition to sampling the chili, attendees ate hot dogs from the Rail Trail Grill and tasted toasted marshmallows and roasted chestnuts.

Everyone savored the variety of chili that was available for the tasting. Every chili was outstanding making it difficult for the voters to decide. As a result, when the votes were counted, we had a tie!!!!:

- ***The Best of Fest People's Choice Awards*** went to the "Global Palate" (Pot #2) and "Highland Bagel Café" (Pot #9).
- ***New this year, a Best of Fest People's Choice Award for Vegetarian Chili***, to "The Wagon Wheel Deli" (Pot #11).

A major attraction, The Children's Tent was a huge success. Lowe's, as they did last year, provided creative entertainment for the kids. They were given hammers and wood material to build various projects right on the spot. The kids were able to take away Lowe's aprons and the fruits of their labor. In addition



tion there were games to be played and a modified scavenger hunt for objects to be identified on the Rail Trail. Children and adults alike lined up for the wagon rides. About the only person who was frowning was the ice carver although he gamely hacked out his artistic masterpieces from large blocks of ice.

Kudos once again go to Director Jerry Luke and his able assistant Jeri Luke for their outstanding execution of this event. Members of the Highland Rotary Club once again demonstrated their continued support of the event by donating their time as chili servers. Thanks to all the Highland Rotary Club members who joined in the fun! Special thanks to all our volunteers and to the chili contributors, for making this a most memorable event. ♦



Rail Trail Odds and Ends

Call For Volunteers. The Hudson Valley Rail Trail has gotten the way it is through lots of muscle and brain power from a host of individuals who have contributed their time. People are needed for both the programs we run and the events we hold each year.

When you became a member you would likely have seen the section at the bottom of the form where you could indicate volunteer opportunities such as Trail Maintenance or Special Events. If you have not filled that out and are keen on helping us, let us know your interest. You can contact Loretta Miller at Lorrie526@aol.com regarding volunteering.

Getting The Rail Trail *Signals* Newsletter Electronically. The *Signals* Newsletter is available in PDF format readable on a PC or Mac. The photographs on the electronic version are in color as opposed to the printed version that normally is in black and white.

Would you like to receive the Newsletter electronically rather than get the hard-copy version? The publication will get to you faster that way and it will save us printing, handling and postage costs.

If so please indicate this by sending an email to our President, Claire Costantino at rebena1@aol.com. ♦

Rail Trail Events In 2010

Annual Membership Meeting and Breakfast at Black Creek June 5th at 9:00AM: Everyone is invited. Free breakfast and music on the Trail at Black Creek. This is our Annual Membership Meeting where you can learn about future plans. Members will vote for new or incumbent Board members of the Rail Trail Association. Enter from Tony Williams Park as access from other direction is blocked due to construction.

Harvest Moonwalk September 24th at 7:00PM: The Harvest Moonwalk begins at the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Depot on 101 New Paltz Road. This event allows you to walk the Rail Trail at night. Refreshments will be served and we will have a bonfire.

Learn to Run Program Starts September 11th at 9:00AM: Join this 10-week program that will make a runner of you whether you are young or old, a natural born athlete or a klutz. Lessons are designed to start with modest sets of running and walking and build you up to be able to run 20 minutes straight by the 10th week without any need to walk. Lessons are taught on the Rail Trail and start from the Rotary Pavilion at 101 New Paltz Road. ♦

A Very Special Thanks To:

Keith Garbounoff for mowing events parking area

Tim Marion for setup of Caboose security cameras

Baker Brothers for mowing the lawn at Rail Trail Depot

Our Silver Spike Program Sponsor--

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If I Can Learn To Run, You Can Learn Too

by Jan Stivers

In the animated film Anastasia, two likeable con men teach a street urchin named Anya to act as if she were the long lost survivor of the Romanov family, the Princess Anastasia. Teaching her to carry herself like royalty, they sing “If I Can Learn to Do It, You Can Learn to Do it.” As the movie unfolds, we are not quite sure if Anya has just learned to act like a princess, or if the con men actually have brought forth the inner princess she always was.

Rafael Díaz has scores of us wondering much the same thing. We are a motley crew, those of us who have taken his Learn to Run course at the Hudson Valley Rail Trail over the past four years. We range in age from our early teens to our mid-60’s. Some of us are former athletes but most are not; one or two of us are fit and trim, but the rest of us most definitely far from it. In just 10 weeks, Rafael teaches us to act like runners – to stretch, to warm up, to breathe, to start out slow and build up gradually, even to dress for the weather. We certainly look like runners when we run for 20 minutes without stopping at our final lesson.

The funny thing is, we feel like runners, too, long before that last lesson. We decide to take the stairs at work, even with a full briefcase. We are confident that we can make that connecting flight in the next terminal with time to spare. Our jeans are a little roomier, our postures a little straighter. Most importantly, as we gather at the Rotary Pavilion at 9 AM on Saturday mornings, rain or shine, we quietly marvel at the enhanced sense of well-being running has brought us.

We are living proof – if we can learn to run, you can learn to run.

My name is Jan, and I am a klutz

I joined the Fall 2009 Class, the seventh one Rafael has taught at the Rail Trail. I had dropped out of an embarrassing number of exercise classes, fed up with trying to finagle my way into the last row where fewer people would notice that my movements were hopelessly out of sync with everyone else. At the first running class, I was delighted to hear that I had to follow only two directions – “walk” and “run.” I decided to try to remain in the class through the fourth week, figuring that a total of 15 minutes of running



Learn-To-Run Spring 2010 Class in 4th Week

sprinkled with walking portions was a reasonable goal for me, one that would be the limit of my endurance.

Each week followed the same structure: some stretching exercises, a few minutes of brisk walking, about 20 minutes of run/walk sequences, a cool down walk and a repeat of the stretches. Rafael brought the class to a close by offering informal tips on running and encouraging us to do our “homework,” which was to repeat the lesson at least twice during the coming week. Each Saturday morning session took no more than 50 minutes.

In the first week’s lesson, we ran for one minute and walked for two minutes, completing this sequence seven times. That sounds a lot easier than it felt back then. But we chatted while we panted, distracting ourselves until Rafael blew his whistle for the last time and we erupted into applause. Over the following weeks, we increased our running time and decreased the walking time, each time reducing the number of sequences needed to add up to 20 minutes total of both running and walking.

Though there were several times I felt challenged, early on I abandoned my plan to drop out around the fourth week. The structure of the program gradually increased my endurance, and I began to look forward to the small increment in the weekly running portion. And for the first time in my life, I began to look forward to doing homework.

That the experience was helping me was apparent, and I could fit it into my life without much effort – just tie on shoes and head out the door. I enjoyed the mild sense of accomplishment each run brought.

There was something else, too, something harder to put my finger on: in vague ways, I seemed – well, less edgy, I guess. Was there something meditative

about running in the quiet of crisp autumn mornings? Was I discharging nervous energy I didn't even know I had? Or was it just a by-product of something I had never before experienced – a modicum of physical coordination? I still have no idea, but I know it is something my running classmates experienced too, because we talked about it as we warmed up on Saturday mornings.

Friends and Family

My husband and daughter had politely declined my invitation to join me in the Learn to Run class, but evidently other students were more persuasive. Michelle brought her sister Ashley; they took turns pushing the stroller with Michelle's infant son Caleb. Linda and Angela, friends and co-workers in Dutchess County, drove across the mid-Hudson Bridge to run with us every Saturday morning. Husband and wife Don and Andrea ran together; Susan and Alan, graduates of an earlier class, were on hand each week to help out. Though most of us came alone, previous classes have enrolled friends, spouses, engaged couples, adult siblings, mothers and daughters, mothers and sons, and even a mother- and daughter-in-law team.

This spring, in addition to spouses Kim and Jerry, *there is a first, a father-daughter team: my own husband Dan and our daughter Carly!* Their



The Running Stivers: Carly, Jan and Dan

watching me run every week throughout the winter – sometimes with “Get-a-Grip” cleats strapped onto my sneakers! – convinced them I was on to something, so they enrolled in the class that started April 17th. Already they are looking, and feeling, like runners.

If we can do it, you can do it. Rafael has agreed to offer another Learn to Run class in the fall that will start on September 11th at Rotary Pavilion. There is no cost other than membership in the Rail Trail Association, which is \$15 per person or \$20 per family. We hope you will join us. ♦

Membership Form

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating, maintaining, promoting, and improving the Hudson Valley Rail Trail for the benefit of the public. Please help by becoming a member and volunteering your talents.

\$15 Individual \$20 Family \$50-\$99 Patron \$100-499 Supporting \$500 Benefactor

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ E-Mail _____

I'd like to volunteer for:

Trail Maintenance
 Special Events
 Ecology Projects
 Other (Specify) _____

Newsletter
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Please send form and check payable: Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.
 12 Church Street, Highland, New York 12528
www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net

Signals



...from the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association

Don't miss!

Breakfast At Black Creek 2010

on the

Hudson Valley Rail Trail

Where Rail Trail Goes Over The Black Creek
(Half Mile From Tony Williams Park)

June 5, 2010 starts at 9AM

www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.
12 Church Street
Highland, New York 12528

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