

Farmington Valley Trails Council

Greenway News

November, 2009
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Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|---|
| President's Letter | 1 |
| Special Olympics Runner Supports Trail By Jean Andersen | 1 |
| Special Olympics Runner, Cont. | 2 |
| Trail Parking Tips By Dwight Weed | 2 |
| Becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community | 3 |
| President's Letter, Cont. | 3 |
| About Us and Member- ship Form | 4 |

Factoids:

The percentage of Americans who commute to work on a bicycle is 1.67%.

That same percentage of Japanese commuters is 15%.

Source: rideyourbike.com

President's Letter

We have had quite a season this year with the Salmon Brook Bridge and the gap in Suf-field completed. After 17 years the linear greenway that is known as the northern section of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) is complete. We could not have done it without the strong support of our area towns and their staffs, and you, our members.

It's no time to sit back and rest on our laurels however, as the East Coast Greenway spurs through Tariffville, Bloomfield and Hartford are ongoing, as well as our new member town of Plainville, which is next for our attention. Plainville's brand new Plan for their section of the FCHT is now essentially complete. The consultants, Malone & MacBroom presented it to the TPZ on October 27, and it was unanimously approved. It calls for a phased approach, with the trail north from the Center to Farmington being Phase 1, south to Southington Phase 2, and the town Center Phase 3. Phase 1 will follow the rail bed that has still not been abandoned by the rail line, Pan Am Southern, (See page 3)

Special Olympics Marathon Runner Supports Trail

By Jean Andersen, FAVARH

Patrick Kral, 29, started running in Junior High School and has been running ever since. Patrick became involved in the Unified Running Team which pairs runners from Special Olympics with other runners who compete as a group in a variety of events including marathons and short races. He ran his first marathon in 2003 in preparation for the Special Olympics in Ireland. Since then Patrick has run in several marathons and relay races across the country and in China. "Patrick runs everyday, it is an important part of his identity. His goal is to qualify for the Boston Marathon." said Patrick's father. "Patrick's running has enabled him to excel among the non-disabled population and has helped him establish a strong definition and a positive image of himself."

In addition to running, Patrick stays in shape by hiking with the FAVARH Summit Hiking Group of which he is the co-founder, along with Stephen Morris, Executive Director at The Arc of the Farmington Valley also known as FAVARH. FAVARH provides programs and support services for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Patrick's next challenge will take place this winter

(cont. page 2)



Special Olympics Runner, Cont.

FVTC

Annual Meeting

Please join us for our annual meeting! Friday, November 20, at 7:00 P.M. Avon Senior Center (Community Room)
635 W. Avon Road, Avon, CT 06001

PROGRAM:

Our President, Bruce Donald will give a year-end report on the FVTC and trail construction, other initiatives and news.

Listen to a talk on the Farmington Canal by Ruth Hummel and Carl Walters. This program is a must for those who love local history and the canal.

No Admission Charge - Light refreshments will be served.

when he will be climbing Mt. Washington with Stephen Morris and Attorney Walter Hampton.

Patrick became involved with the Farmington Valley Trails Council, "Adopt a Trail" program a little over a year ago. He monitors the section of the trail from the tunnel under Rt. 44 to Country Club Road in Avon, where he keeps the trail clear of litter and branches and notifies the FVTC if there are any problems he can't deal with himself.

Approximately 40 volunteers from seven towns through which the Trail passes each monitor a one to three mile stretch of the trail. In some cases, groups like the Scouts, Civitan Club, and school PTOs volunteer to monitor the Trail as well. If you would like more information about FAVARH, visit their website at www.favarh.org for more information about the Adopt-a-Trail program, please contact the FVTC president, Bruce Donald at rbd1414@hotmail.com.

Trail Parking Tips

By Dwight Weed

As more and more people flock to the newly completed northern section of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, parking has become even more challenging. Lots at Brickyard Road in Farmington, the RT 4 lot in Burlington and the RT 4 lot in Farmington are always or nearly always full when a sunny day beckons people to the trail. The newly-built lot on New Britain Avenue in Farmington, (just north of the trail heads for both trails) adds much needed space.

Unfortunately, some parts of the trail lack designated parking areas altogether, leading people to trespass on private property. Presently this issue is of particular concern in Suffield. The area near the Phelps Road Bridge was for years the defacto trail head at the north end of the trail. The area east of the bridge on the north side of Phelps is an open area with easy access to the trail making an inviting parking area. Although the Town of Suffield has attempted to acquire this space for designated parking, it has been unable to come to terms with the owner and the land remains private. The area on the west side of Quarry Road at its intersection with Phelps Road is also private. Currently, trail users park in these spaces at their own risk.

In 2007, the Coca Cola Company awarded the towns of Suffield and Southwick, MA an \$85,000 grant to create a large parking area in both towns, as well as erect a monument at the Connecticut/Massachusetts boarder. The land necessary for the project is being acquired by the Town as open space, and a final deal is expected soon. It is our hope that construction will commence in early 2010.

In the meantime, to avoid the risk of returning from a pleasant ride to discover your car is missing and presumed towed, you might try the larger and more lightly used lots on Copper Hill Road in East Granby and Thompson Road in Avon, which has a very large lot. As a bonus, each of these lots has public facilities.

NEWS!

New Web Site Design

www.fvgreenway.org

Be on the lookout for our new Web site with interactive mapping based on the recent Guide, new information, and quicker updating. Let us know about any upgrades that we can make to continue to grow the site and service both our membership and the community.

Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival

November 14th 2:30-6:30

Cinestudio at Trinity

College, Hartford, CT

Info: 860-233-2211

Hosted by:





Becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community

Two towns that the FVTC serves have started on the path toward accreditation with the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle Friendly Community. Plainville was first, under FVTC board member and long-time Plainville resident Jim Cassidy, and more recently in Simsbury, through East Coast Greenway board-member Steve Mitchell. Both towns to become one of the very few communities to have such a designation. Currently both towns propose to apply in 2010. There are three Platinum Communities: Davis, CA; Portland, OR; and Boulder, CO. There are 10 gold, 23 silver, and 80 bronze, of which only Burlington, VT and Brunswick, ME (both bronze) are in New England. Such communities are recognized for a concerted effort to welcome cyclists by providing safe accommodation for cycling and encouraging people to bike for transportation and recreation, which is a simple way towards improving public health. In return, the program provides incentives, hands-on assistance, and award recognition for accepted communities. Additionally, as these towns look for financing for bike/ped projects, they can be assured to receive favorable consideration. The application consists of a general profile, which if accepted, allows the town to continue to the audit portion. The formal application is an audit of the engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation efforts in the town. A committee then reviews the application. If an award is made it lasts for four years. Every community that applies receives feedback on how to improve. The FVTC is pleased that these towns are working on this designation and we urge our other area towns to look into it. Visit bikeleague.org for more information.

President's Letter, Cont.

cross Northwest Drive, and meet up with the Farmington Industrial Park. The center will most likely be on-road with painted "sharrows" and the southern piece will be partly on-road and off-road in Norton Park.

On October 22nd I was pleased to give a presentation to a meeting in Stamford to jump-start the Merritt Parkway Alliance's work to get the trail built from the New York border to the Housatonic River. When it was built in the 30s, the right-of-way in Greenwich incorporated bridle paths that are still in use today and unofficial pedestrian trails exist throughout much of the 37.5-mile length of the Parkway. As the only continuous inland trail running east-west along the length of Fairfield County, the Merritt would provide a link to existing paths that cross the Parkway as well as to several proposed trails such as the Housatonic River Greenway, the Mill River Corridor, the Route 7 Linear Park and the Norwalk River Trail. It would provide a major missing link in the East Coast Greenway (ECG) that will extend from Maine to Florida.

The current idea is for the City of Stamford to build a piece to serve as the test section. The Alliance is made up of a variety of advocates from the various towns and cities the Merritt runs through as well as the CT Forest and Parks Association, the ECG, and our organization, to name only a few. This is a very high profile project, and other speakers at the conference included the Mayor of Stamford, Daniel Malloy, the new Commissioner of the CT Department of Environmental Protection, Amey Marella, who announced new funding of \$1.5 million in place in each of five years for grants through their trails program, and a surprise, the Deputy Commissioner of ConnDOT, Albert Martin, who spoke for a while on the new emphasis at DOT on "multimodal" transportation and the need for bike trails in the state. It was refreshing to see the second-in-command at DOT at such a function, and promising help with the trails! As always you can find me at rbd1414@hotmail.com. Happy Trails! — Bruce.



Bikes at War?

Bicycle troops were considered indispensable at the start of World War I. The French and Belgians had 150,000 bicycle troops, the British had 100,000, the Germans 125,000 and the Turks also had 125,000. During the war bicycle infantry, scouts, messengers and ambulance carriers were used by all sides. The last country to have a regiment of bicycle troops was Switzerland who disbanded the unit in 2003. There have been reports however, that mountain bikes have been used by U.S. Special Forces to scout in the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and in subsequent battles against the Taliban. —ed.

FVTC DIRECTORS

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**FARMINGTON VALLEY
GREENWAY NEWS**

This publication is written and formatted by board members. The Farmington Valley Trails Council is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation dedicated to advocacy, education, beautification and building multi-use trails in the Farmington Valley of Connecticut.
Contributions to the FVTC are generally tax-deductible.

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We're on the Web!

www.fvgreenway.org

Your Support is Important!



Check desired box and enclose membership fee:

- \$10 Senior 65+ / Junior under 18
- \$20 Single
- \$30 Family
- \$100 Friend
- \$500 Sustaining Member
- \$1,000 Lifetime Benefactor

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (days) _____ (eves) _____

E-mail _____

Would you like to be contacted for volunteer opportunities? Y / N

Comments?

Detach and mail to FVTC, P.O. Box 576, Tariffville, CT 06070

**Farmington Valley Trails Council
P.O. Box 576
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