



Trackin'

The Chautauqua Rails to Trails Newsletter

Fall 2002

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

by: Carolyn Witt

To Chautauqua County residents, Les Johnson is known as a bike enthusiast and the owner of *Hollyloft Ski and Bike* in Jamestown. But to the Chautauqua Rails-To-Trails family, he is so much more. He has been with CRT since its inception back in 1991 and has volunteered countless hours to fulfill a common vision to establish a trail network across Chautauqua County.

Johnson said being a cyclist helped him become interested in establishing trails locally after initially setting up shop in Warren County, Pennsylvania in 1978. He said he would recommend nice places for people to ride their new bicycles after a purchase. After five years of serving the Warren community, Johnson said he and his wife, Cheryl, decided to expand their business to include another shop in Jamestown. The Johnsons operated both stores for a year before deciding to close their Warren business and focus solely on their Jamestown store.

Johnson said he became excited when the possibility arose to acquire some of the current CRT trails and to set up a local Rails-To-Trails chapter. He said he has done everything from manual labor to public relations and speaking engagements. The trails enthusiast is the current CRT vice-president. He previously served as president. Les said it has been a labor of love, especially as he rides the trails today and can enjoy the natural beauty of Chautauqua County's land and residents.

"After going to meetings and facing problems, it's a nice feeling," Johnson said of riding the trails. "It clears the cobwebs (in my mind). There are not a lot of places you can go anymore without feeling like you are trespassing on someone else's land. After all of the meetings, hours and money, you look around and it becomes worth it"

CRT Trail Manager Jim Fincher said Les Johnson has been an integral part of the CRT mission. He said Les has done everything from putting up posts and gates to organizing the trail patrol. He said Les Johnson is dedicated to recreational trails in the county and has worked hard to make that happen.

He's just a good fella," Fincher said of Johnson. "I don't know where we would be without him. Thanks a lot, Les. We sure do appreciate you and all of your hard work."



Les with tires picked up along the trail

The Zen of Addiction

by Jerry Vogy

In the past year, I have become addicted to the Ney Trail section of the Chautauqua Rails-to-Trails system, and I am guilty of spreading my addiction to others. The board members at CRT are constantly designing activities to attract hikers to the trail. As an example, several board members and our trail manager conducted full moon hikes and owl calling on the Ney Trail this past summer that resulted in a nice group of hikers enjoying the trail under moon light skies.

Recently, I wanted to find someone familiar with the plants along the CRT to conduct a nature hike. When I could not secure a naturalist, I decided to put out an invitation to anyone that wanted to hike on Saturday mornings on the Ney Trail to join my wife, my son and me for a hike starting from Prospect Station. As a result of the invitation a core group of hikers have been meeting my family and me on the Ney Trail for a brisk Saturday morning hike that is quickly becoming the highlight of everyone's week.

"That was a good hike; I can feel it." That comment came from one of the hikers in

our group after we finished a recent 2-hour Saturday morning hike. "That is the best view I have ever had of Lake Erie and the shoreline of Canada." That comment came from another one of our hikers as we stood in a group looking at the unbelievable view from the Ney Trail when you hike north from Prospect Station to the picnic bench. At that location, which is about 3 miles north from Prospect Station, the trees part and the deep blue of Lake Erie fills the horizon. The Lake Erie view is worth the hike alone. *(Continued on page 2)*

(Zen cont.) With the changing leaves, hawks overhead and abundant and varied plant life, our group has found that we do not need a naturalist to guide us on the trail. Each hiker adds what he or she knows about the plant and animal life we encounter on the hike. It was interesting to see the entire group really getting excited about the variety of mushrooms we were finding adjacent to the trail. At one point someone spotted a soccer ball size and shape mushroom and everyone in the group stood at the edge of the trail and enthusiastically commented on the great find. As an example of the spontaneous fun we have a promise was made by one hiker to bring her mushroom field guide to the next hike so we will know what mushrooms we are looking at. Did someone say we needed a naturalist?

Our group is made up of people of all ages, but the one person I am most impressed with is an elderly man recovering from a recent stroke. When I saw him getting out of his car he walked with a slight limp and I thought we would have to wait for him as we hiked. When we started on the trail he passed me at a brisk stride and muttered to anyone that wanted to hear something about hiking on this trail has been really good for him. He later told me that he has been a regular on the Ney Trail through a hiking program promoted by the Westfield Hospital. This past spring our trail manager, Jim Fincher, introduced the Wellness staff at Westfield Hospital to the trail and they have been promoting hiking on the Ney ever since. This gentleman in our group has been an obvious benefactor of the trail.

During our most recent hike everyone in our core group promised to bring more hikers the next Saturday. If you want to join us we will be hiking until the snow fills the trail and then we will be switching to cross country skis and snowshoes. We meet each Saturday at 10 AM at Prospect Station. You can contact me at GV2P@aol.com. Directions to Prospect Station and complete information about the CRT can be found at the outstanding CRT Web site at: www2.cecomet.net/crt/. While you are online, please consider joining CRT. **See you next Saturday at 10 AM at Prospect Station.**

Fincher Report

by Jim Fincher Trail Manager

The two major projects are done.

The trail in Sherman, connecting the village center with the railbed to the east of town is complete; signs and gates are up and interpretive signs are in place. If you haven't seen it yet, why not take a hike and check it out? I think it's kinda neat.

The trail in Brocton is also done. The village grant cleared and paved the trail with asphalt from School St to Webster Rd. Signs and gates are in place and people are using the trail. Opening ceremony with Sen. McGee held October 29th.

A major (\$500,000+) trail improvement project is also in the mill. The Villages of Mayville and Sherman co-sponsored a TEA-21 (Transportation Enhancement Act for the 21st Century) grant application. While most details of the grant are unclear at the moment, we will have input into the final product and fully expect to be able to pave up to 10 miles of the trail between Mayville and Sherman.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Chautauqua Rails to Trails. We can't thank you enough for helping keep the organization vibrant. This year, we really didn't need to call on you supporters for work parties, except to clean up the Brocton trail.

Lo Guidace BOCES students cleared vegetation from the Ney trail last fall and spring, which has handled the weeds until now, when the Finley Rd to Prospect Rd area could use some clearing. They will do some clearing starting at Finley Rd and going towards Wolebon Rd, as their schedule allows.

Students from Sue Swank's conservation class at Chautauqua Lake Central School will clear vegetation from Finley towards Prospect Rd. All this help from the school systems has resulted in our not having to call for work parties to clear the trails. But, we still have the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of our wonderful volunteers and will arrange work parties as necessary.

We'd be happy to maintain your name and e-mail address or phone number as a willing volunteer. Please contact me at crt@cecomet.net or at 269-3666.

Thanks to Dick Rockwell, Kent Knappenberger, Curtis Witherow and Dave Crandall for mowing the trails over the course of the summer. Without your help, the trails couldn't be seen for the high weeds. We really appreciate your volunteering.

Remembering John Goodell

"I am very interested in your proposal and will do all I can to assist in a way I can". That was John's response to Dr. Berke's letter of August 1991 inviting him to a Rails-To-Trails organizing meeting at the Audubon, and it describes John's work for Chautauqua Rails to Trails from that day until his resignation in January 1997. He donated his legal services, wrote by-laws, conducted meetings and wrote the minutes, raised funds, submitted grants and spent many evenings and weekends working on the trail. Long time directors remember the meetings in his office,

where fortified by an endless supply of peanuts--and a few cashews--we made plans for the 27-mile linear park we were creating, and we recall Sunday's exploring our right-of way on foot and on hay wagon. Critics and those slow to share his vision might irritate him, but did not affect his enthusiasm for this great project. His work and his enthusiasm are our legacy.

Thank you, John

A Place Where Trails Are Central To The Quality Of Life: *FINLAND.*

By *Thomas Regelski*

Taking a walk in the woods is a pleasure

anytime of the year. But even if you have your own woods to wander around, a developed trail offers special advantages and interests. Over twenty years ago, then, when I bought a country home in the town of Portland only a quarter of a mile from what was to become Rails to Trails, I regularly used the rail bed for walking, jogging, skiing and biking. After Rails to Trails acquired the land and made improvements, I was pleased to see more users of the trail. Even though we live in a rural area with plenty of woodland, forests, lakes and great scenery, the CRT system is still an attraction for “getting away from it all” and for actively participating in nature in healthy ways. I often felt sorry for city folk who, despite having some green areas and parks, are often denied such easy access to the beauty, solitude and recreation that our trails provide.



Several years ago I was fortunate to live in Helsinki, Finland. Living as I do in the most rural part of already rural Chautauqua County already shows that I’m not much of a “city person” and I was a bit apprehensive, first, just about city living, but secondly, about sources for my accustomed jogging, biking, walking and skiing habits. But was I mistaken and pleasantly surprised.

Helsinki is in southernmost Finland but is only a few hours by plane from the Arctic Circle. In fact, it is at the same latitude as Anchorage Alaska. However, like Anchorage, it enjoys a moderate climate due to ocean currents and, surprisingly, the weather there in the winter isn’t much different than Western NY—except that the sun comes up later and sets sooner the closer you are to Christmas. By Christmas, the sun makes an appearance over the horizon by 9 AM (and it is often sunny in the winter) but sets by 3 PM. It has an odd metallic color because it never gets very high in the sky and, for the same reason, throws a lot of long shadows, even at mid-day. (At the end of June, the sun doesn’t set at all!)

As far as snow is concerned, Helsinki has major advantages over Western NY because it snows maybe two or three times every week or ten days, but only up to six inches at a time. (Strangely, given its northern location, the city doesn’t even have snowplows: the traffic alone keeps the streets open! Further to the north plows are used, just as here.) The predictability of a snow cover, even in the southern cities, thus makes Finland a Mecca for cross-country skiing—even more so the further north

you go. And, since Finland has only rolling hills rather than real mountains (unlike its neighbor Norway), cross-country skiing is more popular than down hill skiing.

Greater Helsinki is built on a series of inlets and islands and certainly has no mountains. My first experience skiing there, in fact, was on the frozen Baltic Sea. Not far from my apartment near the harbor was a popular island that is otherwise connected to the mainland by a footbridge, but from my location, people skied to the island on the ice and then around on the island’s trails, which lead you around a quaint, restored Finnish village from the 19th century. On my way back one day I was amused to ski within a hundred yards of a large opening in the ice near a dock where people were swimming in the ice cold water after being in the sauna! The maps of ski trails actually show “trails” (or routes) on the ice from island to island—although you are strictly forbidden from going to the island where the Finnish equivalent of West Point is located.

But what about jogging, hiking and biking? Can’t do that on snow covered ice! I quickly learned an amazing fact of Finnish life: The country is laced with developed trails, in cities and in the countryside. Trails are something the Finnish people like, want and expect from their government—national, regional and local. Using trails is a prime recreational and health activity of the Finnish people. As a result, and along with a diet that favors smoked fish, vegetables and reindeer meat (tastes a lot like beef but a lot less fat and not as “gamy” as venison), the Finns are amazingly healthy, in good shape and long living. It is really incredibly rare to see obesity at all among Finns of any age, and in general they clearly do not suffer from even being unhealthily overweight.

The trail system is so elaborate in the greater Helsinki area (which includes the two “satellite” cities of Vantaa and Espo) that maps are only marginally useful only for navigating the network. When I returned again to Helsinki last year, I lived in the eastern-most part of the city, 20 minutes from the city central by Metro. On one side of my apartment house was the largest shopping mall in Finland; on the other side was a “sports park” that included several soccer fields, ice hockey rinks, an indoor tennis court and—of course—all kinds of trails leading to all kinds of forest terrain.

All trails in Finland are used extensively for exercise walking. In fact, that seems to be a prime activity for couples of all ages. Due to the frequent darkness in winter, the main trails are lighted so people can exercise and get their recreation when they come home from work, or in the evening after supper, even in the early morning. Muggings and the like are next to nonexistent in Finland, so the lighted trails provide greater access, not protection.

(Continued on next page)

Finland Trails *continued*

Sports physiologists in Finland have encouraged walking with walking poles. These are very much like ski poles, except that they don't have the snow baskets and are shorter—because you don't actually use them to “push off.” Instead, the idea is to walk briskly and to *vigorously* “pole” as you would while skiing, with the arm lifting and moving of the poles thus greatly increasing the benefits to the upper body. The result comes close to the health benefits of cross-country skiing, which is one of the most complete forms of aerobic activity. Finnish scientists claim at least 20% more aerobic effect over just briskly swinging your arms. (Rather than buy, I fashioned my own walking poles from old ski poles that were too short for me, and can attest to the added aerobic benefits.) Whenever I jog or bike my favorite routes, I see the same couples or individuals walking their favorite routes. Interestingly, it is very popular for husbands and wives to have matching walking outfits. Walking is, thus, something that Finnish couples often do as a shared interest, particularly after retirement.

Some of the lighted trails are paved, but hard clay is abundant in the country and is used to build most trails. Many of the clay-based trails are so smooth that skateboarders and rollerbladers use them as connecting routes to home or between paved trails. And they are smooth enough that you don't need to use a mountain bike; a touring bike with slightly fatter tires works just fine on 95% of the trails I've been on. In fact, a lot of bikers get such tires with aggressive tread patterns and bike all year around, even in the newest 6 inches of snow!

Most trails are multi-use. The typical trail is for walking, biking and jogging, but is wide enough so that often two cross country tracks can be set on each side. I found it odd that, knowing the sport so well, Finns would just automatically respect the machine-set tracks, but that isn't always the case—though it really isn't a major problem, either. Some trails are so wide that the ski-tracks are way off to one side and skiers and walkers are set apart. A few trails are marked for only skiers and tend to feature more hills, turns and technical challenges than the multi-use trails. Interestingly, after the snow had melted, I discovered that many of the for-skiing-only trails are installed on a coarse mulch foundation and thus aren't even used for walking in the other three seasons and even mountain biking is prohibited on those trails. However, I don't know whether that is the way new trails are installed, or whether there is some other advantage to having a coarse mulch base for ski trails.

There are no snowmobiles in the greater Helsinki area, but out in the countryside, ski trails and snowmobile trails (they call them “ski sledges”) are entirely separate and thus the ski machines do not obliterate ski tracks. All the trails I have skied have been machine set and groomed and it was incredibly rare to ever see trails set by “breaking trail.” In fact, at least where I live, the local Finns seem more inclined to take off their skis and walk the small distance between their apartment house and a

trail rather than to break a short trail themselves. I'm so used to not skiing machine set trails that there are some technical demands such “perfect” trails make on the skier that I have not yet mastered—particularly long, fast straight down hills, and sharp corners.

All trails interconnect in multiple ways and you can usually ski (walk, jog, bike) some kind of circular route of different trails most of the way. One day while skiing in deep forestland, I decided to explore an intersecting trail. This is the best way to find your way around the trail system, using the map only when you are truly lost! Soon I was in even deeper woods, but I could hear what sounded like vehicular traffic. And, before I knew it, my trail was leading me into tunnels built under a major six-lane highway! Once that was behind me, I was in a forest as wild and untouched as any in Western NY. As I climbed up a long hill, the trail made a sharp turn to the left and just at that point, to my complete astonishment, there was a small sign that read “Metro 1 km” with an arrow pointing to the right. I was two-thirds of a mile from the “subway” and thus (as is often the case), anyone in the city-central can get on the Metro and have quick and easy access to wonderful trails in the middle of deep forestland. In fact, a visitor to Helsinki can arrive at the Central Railroad Station and after walking only a mile be on a trail in a city park that leads to ever-more remote trails that eventually take you 150 miles from the city in a huge circular route and back to the railroad station!

On any given day, at any time of day (no matter how dark), these trails are in constant use. Young mothers can be seen in great numbers pushing their baby carriages—even in the coldest days of winter, with their babies so bundled up that they're almost invisible—and the elderly, in particular, are devoted users. While all of what I have described is prevalent in the urban and suburban areas, even the rural towns and villages have their own trail systems. It is not that Finland doesn't have sidewalks; it seems to be that the Finns intentionally seek to escape to the solitude and beauty of nature because sidewalks are clearly not used for their exercise and recreation.

It often seems a shame in comparison that Americans have not come to value combining the escape to nature, healthy exercise and recreation by making more use of nature trails. Chautauqua County is blessed not only with Rails to Trails but also with the East and West Overland Trails maintained by the County. Between Mayville and Sherman, in fact, CRT and the West Overland Trail actually connect. No one in our county can be more than a few minutes by car from a trail and, while they can't be used as regularly as the Finns use theirs, local trails still offer all the same attractions and benefits for special occasions. However, it seems ironic that the residents of Helsinki have more and easier access to developed trails for recreation and health than most people in our rural area. This is an occasion where Finnish cultural traditions have, without question, promoted shared family recreation and important health benefits that American's might well consider making into at least family traditions.

FROM THE CORRAL

By Carolyn Witt

The corral at my home is a little emptier these days. I am sad to report that Engraver, my faithful trail riding companion and friend, passed away after complications developed from a stroke. He was 27. We spent 25 years together on the trail from the days of my childhood to the present. I think a part of me will always miss him.

I want to thank all of the hikers, bikers, bird watchers and friends who would stop and say hello as we made our way down the trail and the Trackin' readers for allowing us to share our adventures with you. Engraver enjoyed meeting new people and making friends. I hope you will welcome William, my 1,300-pound Quarter Horse, in the same manner.

William is a larger, browner version of Engraver whose main goal in life is to become a lap dog. I haven't worked out the details on how I will explain to him that he is technically a beast of burden (horse). It has never occurred to him that he will have to actually work for a living.

Fall is a great time of year for a trail ride, even if the horse in question is a bit lazy. The leaves are in full bloom



Engraver and Carolyn doing some fancy stepping at a horse show

lending an artistic touch to the natural beauty of the trails. Every place you look there is flurry of activity. The squirrels are busy building up their winter stash and the birds have cast their eyes toward the skies knowing it will soon be time to head toward a more temperate climate.

Everyone is getting ready for the glistening, white winter blanket that will soon cover the landscape. Even William is getting ready for winter without knowing it. He is busy growing a thicker coat to stay warm. Plodding along through the woods, he and I have come to an understanding.

We stop when I want to stop and we turn when I want to turn. After a few weeks, he has come to love our rides and now looks forward to being ridden. I'll have to let you know how he turns out as a barrel-racing prospect.

Remember as the days to turn colder to warm your horse's bit up in your hands before putting on the bridle. It is also a good idea to remember to wear brightly colored clothing, especially orange to distinguish you and your horse from hunters who are now also headed to the woods. Until next time, keep on riding and I will see out on the trail.

Saturday, April 5 Railroad / Trolley History Hike Easy 3 miles

Meet Village Historian Devon Taylor at the Mayville Depot (across from the Kwik Fill, near Lakeside Park on Rt 394) at 10 AM for a hike along the old railbed wrapping around the north end of Chautauqua Lake. Devon will discuss the history of the various lines that shared these rights-of-way beginning with Western New York and Philadelphia Railroad in 1867, through another railroad or two, and including Chautauqua Traction Company and JW & NW trolley lines. Devon will speak to the location and function of some old artifacts including an old watertower and such. Those that are interested can join Devon at the end of the hike for a walk around the Mayville Cemetery. Please come prepared for the elements.
Coordinator: Devon Taylor 753-3116

Do you enjoy nature?

Would you like to share your enjoyment with children?

Jamestown Audubon is looking for **trail guides** to lead groups of 8-12 children on fun, sensory-oriented nature walks.

You do **not** need an extensive knowledge of the natural world, we encourage children to use their senses to heighten observation skills.

We provide the training and everything you need, including ideas and materials for activities.

With many walks each week, it's easy to fit into your schedule; 2 hours a month or a week—your choice. There are even North County opportunities! Call Jennifer 569-2345 or jaudubon@netsync.net.

If you have an idea, article, picture or anything else you think would improve either the newsletter or Website, contact the CRT at crt@cecomet.net. Put Trackin' in the subject line

As Promised
CRT Trail Highlights -- Part 2
Mayville to Brocton

Mayville Town Park Section -- Rt. 394 at the Town Park to Rt. 430 near County Highway Dept. garages. Approx. 3 miles.

- A. CRT office in the old RR depot on Lake Chautauqua.
- B. Depot site of major passenger and freight terminal in late 1800's and early 1900's. From here travelers boarded lake steamers for points south on Lake Chautauqua.
- C. Site of first ice houses to ship ice to major eastern cities.
- D. Fish mongers would buy fish from winter ice fishermen and take to trains to sell in Cleveland, Buffalo and Pittsburgh. Pike and walleye were caught by lures and spears. Samples of fish lures and spears can be seen in depot museum next to CRT office.
- E. President Franklin D. Roosevelt used this depot to go to Chautauqua Institution to give his famous "I hate war" speech in 1943.
- F. Public docking for boats and fishing on the dock are allowed.
- G. CRT trail follows lake shoreline most of trail here.

Trail By-pass -- Rt. 430 to Plank Road via Honeysette Road. approx. 5m. CRT owns most of this property that is being by-passed, but, we do not own a 1/2 mile section in the middle that is private property, rendering it impassable for the time being.

Laurie A. Baer Nature Trail -- Plank Road to Bliss Road. Look for Niagara Mohawk power lines. Trail follows underneath towers. approx. 1 mile

- A. Beaver dams adjacent to the trail. wildflowers, pastures, woodlands. Planked RR bridge.
- B. Trail permission by of Niagara Mohawk trail license. License extends from just beyond Parker

road to approx. 1/2 mile in from Bliss Road.

Alison Wells Ney Nature Trail -- Bliss Road to Brocton -- approx. 6.5 miles
Section #1 Bliss Road to Colt Road, crossing Barnes Road at Prospect Station, Findley Road, Woleben and Thayer.

- A. Beautiful canopy of trees, wildflowers, pastures, streams and high over passes.
- B. Look for Lake Erie vistas. On a clear day you can see buildings in Canada.
- C. Ghost town at Prospect station. 1865 - 1910 Site of train depot, Prospect Station Hotel, post office and general store. Foundation for hotel is supposed to exist, but has not been found yet.
- D. It was a dark and snowy night, just south of Prospect Station, site of 1872 Christmas Eve Train wreck. The train's passenger cars derailed off the tracks on a trestle that must have been filled in after the accident, because no trestle exists today. The passenger cars fell down a 25 foot embankment. Twenty people were killed in the accident.
- E. Area of August 17, 1869 Runaway Train story. Burning oil cars chased the steam locomotive down the escarpment at speeds up to fifty miles per hour. The oil cars carried over 50,000 gallons of oil and left a flying avalanche of fire three hundred feet long. Flames leapt into the air at heights of 100 feet! No one was killed, and the engine finally out ran the oil cars on the flat beyond Brocton.
- F. At Thayer Road, turn right on the county road ride up the escarpment ,approx. 2 miles to Lunesman Overlook Park. Fantastic view of Lake Erie and flat Lake Erie plain.

Trail By-pass Ney Trail section #2 -- Colt Road to East end of Ellicott Road near rt 380. approx. 2.5 miles

This section of trail is owned by CRT, but in the years of disuse by the railroad area residents have used the property as their own. There are a number of front and back yards that are adjacent to or on the trail at this time. CRT is searching for the best solution to this problem and continue the trail in this area.

Section # 3 -- Brocton Recreational Trail Ellicott Road to Brocton School at School St., crossing Webster and Highland Roads approx. 2 miles

- A. This is the best developed section of trail to date. Crushed limestone surface and Asphalt surface from School St. to Highland Ave. (to be completed summer of 2002)
- B. This section of trail was rescued and developed with the help of the NYS Healthy Heart Program and the Chautauqua County Health Dept. A major grant from the Healthy Heart program paid for the work.
- C. Trail provides a safe off the road route for the kids to and from school. The trail also is part of a loop thru the town of Brocton for walkers and joggers.
- D. Trail passes thru grape fields, wetlands and residential areas.

Brocton Recreation Parks Trail (proposed) -- approx. 1 mile Brocton Village Park on State Route 20 to baseball fields on Fuller Road. CRT owns the land connecting the two village parks. Future plans call for paving the trail between the two parks.

We hope you will use the trails and add to these highlights.

CRT and the Birding Hotline

By Dick Miga



Since my first visit to the Sheldon Trail on April 4th 1997, the tremendous growth of both the popularity of this trail and the entire Rails to Trails system has been phenomenal. Included in that growth is the number of bird reports submitted to the Chautauqua County Birding Hotline from the trails.

Yours truly started the hotline on January 18, 1998 as a means of communicating the bird movement through our county. Like the Trails growth, the growth of the hotline, too, has been tremendous. The hotline is updated daily and reports all bird sightings from House Sparrows to Golden Eagles, no report is ignored. As of this writing, approximately 300 different birds have been called in that were sighted in the county by over 230 different callers. Compared to major rare bird alerts, our hotline is providing birders and interested parties with a very good picture of the migrating, nesting, and accidental visiting by birds to our area.

Both, the Trails and the Hotline compliment one another, the hotline has made many callers aware of the trails and their value as bird areas, and the trails provides in return many bird sightings from the varied habitats that surround them.

As a result of both, seasonal checklists are being prepared for some of the trails such as Sheldon and Ney. Reports are still coming in from persons who have gone on some other sections of the trails that seem to have their own habitat and bird attraction features. Future lists will be prepared for these areas as well.

To access the hotline, dial 595-8250. A message identifying the hotline greets you and you can either press 1, which gives you the prior day report of birds, or 2, which permits you to report a sighting or sightings. The hotline is updated each day at approximately 9 to 9:30 PM.

A very interesting phenomenon is occurring through hotline usage. Many out of area callers are accessing it resulting in an increase of visitors to our county for purposes of observing the sightings reported. In turn many of the callers have become regular visitors to areas as the Sheldon and Ney trails, as well as contributors of reports.

Finally, the development of the Rails to Trails system and the Chautauqua County Birding Hotline have both become prime contributors to the awareness of the many varied habitats and bird movements through our county. Continued use of both by both, local and out of area persons, can only increase the popularity of Chautauqua County as an excellent visitation site.

Chautauqua County Hiking Club

by Bonnie Bowen

I think of Rails To Trails as cousins to the Chautauqua County Hiking Club. We all share common interests in the outdoors, hiking, land preservation and enjoying this beautiful county we live in.

I have been involved in the hiking Club since May of '95, but the club has been around since 1974. I am impressed by the continuity considering the "looseness" of our organization.

Let me tell you about us. We have a core of workers who surround our Lead Coordinator Sam Kent. I use the term "worker", but there isn't much work involved. We have an organizational meeting in September, which doubles as a potluck supper. The few who are planning minded continue to meet for a few weeks accepting (and seeking) outlines of hikes and activities to comprise a schedule that will keep folks about as busy as they want to be for a year.

The schedules are mailed out by December 1st. Expenses are minimal so the dues are \$2.00 for single membership, and \$3.00 for a family. It is not necessary to be a member to hike, but dues will get you on the mailing list. The schedule also is printed in the local newspapers and in various tourism publications. And thanks to the talents of one of our members we have a Website, which links to CRT's. (www.bigsplat.net/organization/hikeclub).

If you check out our schedule on the Website you will see that hiking is only one of our activities. We also have skiing (downhill and cross country), camping, canoe/kayaking, history hikes (Devon Taylor will lead one in April which will include Mayville railroad/trolley history) and even occasional road trips. We have something for every ability and interest. And if we missed yours, we invite you to call us and we'll put you on the schedule.

We can be reached through the website or call Sam Kent at **386-7332** (halebopp@attglobal.net) or Bonnie Bowen at **296-8563** (bbowen@copper.net)

One may have learned to enjoy the sublime, the beautiful, the useful, the orderly, but he has missed something if he has not also learned to enjoy the incongruous, the illusive, and the unexpected.

Samuel McChord Crothers, American minister and author

___ Yes I want to support CRT's effort to change the abandoned rail lines of Chautauqua County into multi-use trails which can be enjoyed by all.

___ Individual \$10 ___ Sustaining \$100
___ Family \$25 ___ Benefactor \$500
___ Patron \$50 ___ Sponsor \$1000 up
___ Business Partner \$100/\$200 per year for 10 years

Name- _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Mail to: Chautauqua Rails to Trails
PO Box 151
Mayville, NY 14757-0151

The **CRT** website is at:
www2.cecomet.net/crtt



View From The Locomotive

By Robert Berke

No flowers --- No leaves --- No sun --- November.

And so another year, the 11th for CRTI winds to a close. I look ahead in the next weeks to the official opening of the Brocton/Ney Trailhead opening. This heralds the beginning of a series of potential initiatives to incorporate fitness paths in every village/town in the county. The linkage to our mission of safe recreational trails is essential if we are to flourish as an organization as well as for the health and safety of our county residents of all ages and stages. Lack of fitness, diabetes and obesity are integrally linked in the slow decay of the health and prosperity of this country. The availability of easily accessible venues for exercise has never been more important than this time in our history. We continue to need all the help we can muster to further this goal. Thanks to all our loyal Board Members who continue the task of keeping the dream alive...we need more volunteers and willing rank and file to make this dream come true..all the best in the coming year and come out and enjoy the best that this county has to offer in natural beauty, history and good health. --- R. Berke MD.

Rettrb Service Requested



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