



Signals

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

Volume 8 Number 1

Winter 2010/2011

WinterFest 2011 Promises Great Activities

by Rafael Díaz

Feel those winter winds? It's time for the Hudson Valley Rail Trail's Annual WinterFest! This event, now in its 14th year, features activities that include the highly successful kids' program that will keep the little ones busy as well as the popular Chili Testing contest, which is being expanded this year. Plan to bundle up and drop by on Saturday January 15th to enjoy the winter scene at the Rail Trail Depot.

The main draw is the contest that pits local area restaurants, deli's, caterers, etc. competing for the coveted "*Best of Fest*" prize for the finest tasting chili. We have expanded to 20 contestants by using a new layout for the steaming pots of chili. The judging is on a blind basis by you and other attendees. The chili varies greatly. Some are spicy, some are exotic, some are, well, come and taste the array yourself.

WinterFest has proven to be a huge hit with kids because of the number of free activities and games especially designed for them. One attraction is the

INSIDE: Events In Pixs, p. 3
"Flurry of five events in celebration of the Eastern Expansion of the Rail Trail to link with Walkway ..."

heated Lowe's Project Tent where kids, under the supervision of Lowe's staff, have simple projects they can make. Lowe's donates all the materials and tools needed for this activity. Next to the Rail Trail Depot will be a number of outdoor games for kids to play.

Other highlights include ice carving demonstrations and free tractor drawn hayrides through the Rail Trail's winter wonderland. You can also warm yourself by the huge bonfire and enjoy free roasted chestnuts and toast free marshmallows. On sale are hot dogs, hot beverages and the chili tasting tickets. *WinterFest is on Saturday, January 15th, 11am to 2pm. The site is the Rail Trail Depot in Highland at 101 New Paltz Road. Admission is \$2; children 6 years of age and under admitted free.* ♦

In This Issue

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| WinterFest 2011 | 1 |
| President's Message | 2 |
| Fall Celebrations In Pictures | 3 |
| A Walker's Journeys on Trail..... | 4 |
| New on Website | 5 |
| Calendar for 2011 | 5 |
| From Novice to 5K Racer..... | 6 |
| Best of Hudson Valley Award | 7 |



President's Message

This has been quite an exciting year, not only for the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, but also for me. I do not often write about my experiences, but thought I would share this with you.

For 15 years I looked forward to the eastward expansion of the rail trail to become a reality. It really hit me on July 16th as the rail trail bridge over Vineyard Avenue was being bolted in place. At that moment, Donna Reyer, Cablevision News, began to interview me. As I calmly begin to answer her questions about the bridge and rail trail expansion, tears came to my eyes and I was momentarily unable to speak. For those of you who know me, you know that I am very seldom at a loss for words.

It suddenly hit me, really hit me, that after 36 years of lying abandoned, the rail bed was once again connected and the opening of the 1.2 mile extension of the Rail Trail was imminent.

Within one year, I experienced two enormous grand openings: October 3, 2009 for Walkway Over the Hudson; and on October 2, 2010 for the eastward expansion of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail. Having the honor of serving on the Boards of both the Hudson Valley Rail Trail and the Walkway Over the Hudson during the development and completion of these two outstanding projects seemed to overtake me as I spoke to the camera.

During the ribbon cutting ceremony on October 2nd, I quoted French novelist Anatole France, "To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe." I spoke of those who dared to dream, dared to plan, dared to act and dared to accomplish this great thing known as the Hudson Valley Rail Trail.

It wasn't until the "An Evening Under the Stars!" Gala when I repeated those words that I realized that I too had dared to dream, dared to plan, dared to believe and dared to act. It is truly an overwhelming experience to realize that you have helped accomplish great things for your community.

Please take the time to experience all that the Hudson Valley Rail Trail has to offer. It is a very special place.

Claire

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



Bridge Being Bolted In Place



Signals

is published on an occasional basis by:

**Hudson Valley Rail Trail Assoc.
12 Church Street
Highland, NY 12528**

Editor: Rafael Díaz

HVRTA BOARD MEMBERS:

President

Claire Costantino

Vice President

Eric Norberg

Treasurer

Francine Miller

Recording Secretary

Loretta Miller

Corresponding Secretary

Susan Van De Bogart

Rafael Díaz

Everton H. Henriques

Jerry Luke

Lauriann Marion

Suzanne Wirth

Rail Trail's Busy Fall of Events In Pictures

by Rafael Díaz

Starting with the MoonWalk on September 24th, we had a month-long flurry of five events in celebration of the Eastern Expansion to link with Walkway Over The Hudson. Below are some photos of this busy month: Moonwalk; The Ribbon Cutting for the new part of the trail; "An Evening Under the Stars" Gala; Highland's HudsonFest, for the first time held on

the Rail Trail; and a 5K Inaugural Run/Walk Race. (Pictured below cutting the ribbon, left to right: Assemblyman Frank Skartodos; Ulster County Executive Mike Hein; Trail President Claire Costantino; Lloyd Town Supervisor Ray Costantino; Lloyd Councilwoman Nancy Hammond; Congressman Maurice Hinchey; and Ulster County Tourism Director Rick Remsnyder.)



Vivian Photography

Vivian Photography

Vivian Photography

Rail Trail Is Now an Essential Part of My Life

by Libbie Werlau

At this point in my life, my week feels incomplete without my Saturday morning visit to the Hudson Valley Rail Trail—a concept I never would have imagined the first time I set foot on the trail.

Six years ago, on a Saturday morning in January, I took my first few steps onto the trail, only to be caught short by the bitter cold. The sight of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Winterfest had drawn my attention from the road and so I stopped to see what the celebration was all about. Not being a fan of the winter months, my initial reaction was to wonder why people would willingly be outside on a day that frigid. I wound up having a great time participating in the many activities, and even hiked a bit on the trail before heading back to the warmth of my car. The hour or so spent at Winterfest convinced me to come back to the trail when the weather was more pleasant.

A few months later, I returned with my husband and we rode the length of the trail a few times on our bikes. It was a beautiful day and after a few trips back and forth along its then 2.5 mile stretch, I felt satisfied that we had seen most everything the trail had to offer. It was participating in the Learn to Run class, however, that helped me to realize the vast array of experiences the Hudson Valley Rail Trail still had in store for anyone willing to take the time to explore.

The class instructor, Rafael Diaz, helped promote this idea by introducing us to different sections of the trail over the duration of the course. We would start at the pavilion one week, at Tony Williams Park another or run different routes based on weather conditions. As a result, I began to study the trail's secrets and found that each weekend came new discoveries.

Varied Experiences With the Seasons

During the spring, for example, wildflowers bloom alongside the trail one week only to be shadowed by the trees leafing out the next. On colder days, it feels better to run toward the Commercial Avenue end of the trail with its wide spaces and sunshine, while on warmer days, cool breezes and shaded areas can be found closer to Tony Williams Park.

I have learned to examine the blacktop closely in certain seasons in order to avoid the brilliant orange salamanders that abound, and to scan the sky in other seasons for the rare glimpses of pileated woodpeckers and bluebirds that cross overhead. And where

winter was once cause for dread, I now find it among the most beautiful of times to be on the trail. Icicles cling like jewels to the rock formations along the trail, while the woods offer glimpses of red berries and brightly colored songbirds. There is camaraderie among others braving the trail in the same cold weather that is unmatched in any other season.

In every season, the trail has introduced me to so many new friends. I've participated in local races and other events with members of my original running group and with others met on the trail. It was from other runners that I first learned about the planned Walkway and coming connection to the Rail Trail.

Smiles and Joy Along the Trail

One of my classmates from that first running class, Maryanne, has been my Saturday morning walking/running partner each week now for years. Like me, she finds joy in the experience. We have been amused at the expressions of children trying out new bicycles for the first time, laughed at my dog's delight in sprinting down the trail steps to dive into the Black Creek, encouraged new members who are learning to run with Rafael and exchanged smiles and well-wishes with the many others we see weekend after weekend, enjoying the trail as we are.

One of my discoveries is the history of the rail bed we walk. It continues to amaze me that I am on where train cars of passengers, freight and even circus animals passed on their way between New England and the West. I remember being a child and waving to the train that passed by my home in Modena on the same line that is now part of the Rail Trail.

This past year, Saturday mornings took on an even greater level of excitement as Maryanne and I noted the progress made in joining the trail to the Walkway each time we returned. The first day the expansion officially opened, we spent hours walking from caboose to caboose and from county to county. We were so excited by the new trail section and the connection to the Walkway that we logged more than eight miles before we realized how long we had been out, a distance that would have been unfathomable to me on that long-gone January day.

And as far as that winter cold? At this point, we walk in all kinds of weather and look forward to the changing seasons. We have dressing for the various



weather conditions down to a science and take pride in the fact that we are out there each week throughout the year, some days nearly unrecognizable in our layers of hats, scarves and gloves.

This winter, I am looking forward to discovering what trail secrets we will uncover along the new section and how many more miles we will log in the process. And on the first truly cold day, I'll think back to that Winterfest and remember how those first steps on the trail helped me to discover a world of rich experiences all within the span of a few miles. ♦

Visit Us On the Web

If you have not taken a look lately at the Hudson Valley Rail Trail website of late, do visit us at www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net.

We have added some features. You can download our new brochure (or pick up a hard copy at any of our trailheads and various places in Highland). Click "About" to get to that page. While there, click the link to the rail trail video by VisitVortex that is narrated by Ray Costantino, Lloyd Town Supervisor and Rail Trail co-founder.

When you view the video take notice of the great paintings in the caboose windows. We owe thanks for these to artist Therese Mazzetti.

Rail Trail Events In 2011

Winterfest-January 15, 2011, 11AM-2PM. Chili cook-off by various restaurants, ice carving demonstration, roasted chestnuts and toasted marshmallows. Hay rides on the trail, kids activities. 101 New Paltz Road.

Learn to Run Program starts April 16th at 9AM at the Depot. A 10 week program that will make a runner of you, whether old or young, able to run 20 minutes nonstop. Meet at Rail Trail Depot at 101 New Paltz Road.

Annual Membership Meeting and Breakfast on Black Creek June 4, 2011 At 9:00 AM. This is National Trail Day. Free breakfast with music. Learn about future plans for the Rail Trail. Members vote for directors to the board of the HVRTA. On Rail Trail at Black Creek.

Hudson Valley 5K Race/Walk August 20th, 9AM. Event is on the Rail Trail and begins at Caboose at 75 Haviland Road near Walkway.

Harvest MoonWalk September 9th, 7:30-8:30PM: Begins at Rail Trail Depot at 101 New Paltz Road. The only time you can walk the Rail Trail at night and enjoy the full moon. There will be a bonfire and refreshments will be served.

Hudson Valley Rail Trail Gala - An Evening Under the Stars! October 7, 2011, starts at 6PM. The event will take place on the trail at 75 Haviland Road beginning with a cocktail reception followed by dinner and dancing. This is a black tie optional event and will be held rain or star-shine under festively decorated tents.

HudsonFest 2011, October 8, 2011, 10AM to 6PM. A festival on the Rail Trail to celebrate what the Valley has to offer with a focus on the arts, artisans, crafts people, farmers, wineries, local restaurants, food vendors, distilleries, breweries, agri-business, non-profits and community service organizations. Entrance at 75 Haviland Rd.

A Very Special Thanks To:



**ANTHONY C. VIGLIOTTI, D.M.D.
FRANK A. VIGLIOTTI, D.M.D.
Periodontics and Implantology
29 Fox Street
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601**

What Rail Trail Means To Novice Runner

by *Andrea Mannix*

Saturday morning, October 16, 2010 was a beautiful, crisp autumn day and the perfect setting for the Inaugural 5K Walk/Run of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail that celebrated the newly completed extension connecting Highland to the Walkway Over the Hudson. My goal was to run continuously for the entire 5 kilometers (3.1 miles), as this was my second 5K in my lifetime.

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail has a special place in my heart and means so much to me. It was here in September 2009 that I began the “Learn to Run” program at the Rail Trail Pavilion, meeting on Saturday mornings at 9 am. Led by Rafael Díaz, I “graduated” 10 weeks later by running 20 minutes straight. It was truly an experience to be with a group of people. We were of all age groups, men & women with varying levels of running experience (mine was zero, although I play tennis and basketball) with most participants having little to no running experience in the past.

As It Was In the Beginning

Each week, the majority of our weekly running group returned, sharing stories of doing their “homework” from the past week, which was repeating the previous Saturday’s lesson. We worked our way up from running 1 minute and walking 2 minutes, with each week’s class increasing the running and decreasing the walking.



Andrea Mannix, on Right, running with Carol Lagoy

Each of us learned something from someone in our group. Whether it was to just use a digital kitchen timer to time our running vs. spending money on an elaborate timing device, or to just add 30 extra seconds of running each day we ran to increase our endurance and make the next week’s lesson a little easier.

An Old Friend Sparks A Goal

I remember my first day showing up for the “Learn to Run” program, and was curious if I would know anyone else there. Who did I see, but Coach Suzanne Wirth from my two children’s physical education at Lenape Elementary School in New Paltz. My children, Kevin and Denise, are now 17 & 14 respectively, so I spent time with Suzanne catching up about my kids, and she informed me that she was a “Learn to Run” graduate from Spring 2009. Suzanne is also now is on the board of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail.

Suzanne did something that got me thinking in more ambitious terms. She let the new group of potential runners know that she had run the Shamrock Run in Kingston the previous March as her first run. It was a 2 mile fun run not a race, although you had a number and got a T-shirt. She recommended it as a great first run for members of our class to challenge ourselves in a non-pressured, fun environment. I filed that information away for future reference.

So as our class progressed, I kept that 2 mile fun run in mind and after graduation, I registered for the Shamrock Run. Suzanne made all the arrangements about carpooling to Kingston, and we ran it and crossed the finish line together! What a great feeling of accomplishment to not ever have done anything like it before, and in seven months – from September to March – finish a 2-mile event. My next goal was to run a 5K!

Toughening It Out During Winter

I continued to run on Saturday mornings, even in the winter, as the Rail Trail is plowed and is still a great surface to safely run. The Spring “Learn to Run” class began and I ran with them whenever possible.

The Gardiner 5K in July was coming up, so I registered and challenged myself to keep running so I could participate in that race. My only goal was

to finish my first 5K even if I had to walk some of the course, which is what happened as it was one of the most humid evenings of the summer. Another "Learn to Run" graduate from my same class, Carol Lagoy, and I carpooled and encouraged each other and both completed that 5K race.

Running the Full 5K

So when it was time for the Hudson Valley Rail Trail Inaugural 5K, my goal was to finish the race by running continuously. Ironically, after I started the race, Suzanne Wirth was walking nearby and not participating in the 5K. So we chatted a while with her walking and me slowly running beside her. Eventually, I continued running on my own and listening to my iPod.

There were several participants from our Fall 2009 "Learn to Run" class also running in this first 5K. Just to participate was exciting. The scenery running along the beautiful trail with the trees, the rock cuts, and just the freedom to not have to think about motor vehicles around you is very inspirational. We are very fortunate to have this great four miles of paved rail trail for our use and enjoyment.

As the Hudson Valley Rail Trail brochure says on its cover "From Walkway Over the Hudson to the Hamlet of Highland and beyond...four miles of paved adventure through time and nature." ♦

Another Award for Rail Trail

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail has again won a **Best of Hudson Valley Award** from *Hudson Valley Magazine*. That's three out of the last four years! The previous ones were in 2007 and 2009 when we got the awards as "*The Best Bike Trail*." This time the award is for "*The Best No-Cost Alternative to the Gym*" for our Learn-To-Run Program.



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
 Fund Raising
 Refreshments

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!

***WinterFest 2011
on the
Hudson Valley Rail Trail***

Hudson Valley Rail Trail Depot

101 New Paltz Road

January 15, 2011 from 11am to 2pm

www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Highland, New York 12528

12 Church Street

Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.

Signals

