



# TRAIL NEWS

ISSUE #16

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

AUTUMN 2011

## NORTH COAST INLAND TRAIL

### OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS *To Norwalk and Bellevue we go!*

Your horse knows the way, you'll bike it all day; cross the mighty river below. Whoa!

Soon the North Coast Inland Trail will be complete from Norwalk to Bellevue as construction of the last link in Monroeville will start this winter, linking the new Huron River Bridge and Rt. 99 with Peru Center Road.

Eastbound from the east end of the bridge, the trail will veer to the south and drop onto the former Lake Shore Electric Railroad right-of-way along the river. The trail will then climb slowly toward Peru Center Road where trail users will rejoin the completed NCIT to Norwalk. The result will be a very scenic ride, run, or walk along the Huron River on the south side of the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway. We plan to host a grand opening next spring.

Further west the trail has reached Bellevue! Wilhelm Construction completed stone installation to Prairie Road and FRTTI volunteers erected signage. The trail will use connecting streets to navigate through Bellevue to connect to the Sandusky County portion which will build east from Clyde in 2012. New NCIT signage will direct trail users.

Parking is available at the Bellevue Rec Center, the Mad River and NKP Museum, and at the northeast corner of Reservoir #4.

Firelands Rails to Trails is extremely excited to introduce newly resurfaced trail from Halfway Road to Peru Center Road in Ridgefield Township, and the completed trail through central Collins. Also, the development of the Galen Saylor Family Park in Collins has begun.

The 1.5 miles of trail west of Halfway Rd. that was given a fresh coat of hard-packed crushed limestone was part of the original 3.1 miles that opened in 2005. "A good part of that section was more like a farm lane than a developed rail-trail," said FRTTI Trustee Rick Schaffer. "Getting the trail upgraded is something we're proud of. Wilhelm Construction did an outstanding job of trail building."

In Townsend Township, nearly 3.5 miles of continuous trail is now open from Medusa Road to DeRussey Road. "Most of the trail near Collins is beautifully wooded," said FRTTI President Joe Mantey. "Mark Haynes Construction moved some serious earth, put in a new culvert and created new parking areas".

Parking is available at the Hartland Center Road trailhead plus at a new, large gravel lot on South Railroad Street which is designed for easy access by horse trailers and is the first development of the Saylor Family Park. Watch for further building of the park over the next few years.



*The Huron River Bridge is complete and will see through traffic soon!*



*We made it! The NCIT has now reached the east side of Bellevue at Prairie Rd.*



*This new, well manicured stone trail awaits you west of Halfway Road!*



*The new trail in Collins and the future Galen Saylor Family Park at right!*

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**DEPOT  
OPEN HOUSE  
SUN NOV 6  
1-4 PM**

## MIXED FREIGHT



New mileposts are being installed between Norwalk and Bellevue. Miles ascend westbound from Lorain. **Fritz Kuenzel and his grandson, Caleb**, measured carefully and several volunteers installed the posts over several work days... **The Buckeye Trail** is moving to NCIT! Look for the blue blazes soon.... Remember, you may renew your memberships and make donations on our website via **PayPal**.... This year's **Bike to Beat Cancer** riders pedaled 37 miles and raised over \$1,000 for cancer research... **Hartland New Horizons 4H Club** has adopted two trail sections west of Collins... **Keith Jackson**, of Collins, has been handling the trail mowing in Collins with **Rich Libbee** handling all the weedwacking.... **Bill and Joyce Dupont** have stepped up and now handle all the mowing just west of North West St.... **Steve Siesel** and **Stan Bernhardt** have been mowing everywhere in between!... We have a few sections of trail yet to be adopted and are looking for volunteers to mow trailheads and trailside parks and various sections of the trail.... Welcome new volunteers **Steve and Mary Ivory, along with their son, Danny**, who have been active at many recent work days. Hope to see **you** as well on the trail soon as well... 2012 promises to be a busy year of trail construction west of Medusa Rd. as well as maintaining many new miles of trail.... We need and appreciate your generous donations now more than ever. Thank you!

## NATURE NEWS *by Lisa Wendt*

Did you take a trip out to the west end of the trail this summer? If not, it's not too late! Jump on your bike and start pedaling...or just park at the stone lot on Sandhill Road and head west toward Bellevue. That portion of the trail is surrounded by open farmland and was, back in the day, a prairie. Now that the trail is complete, your FRTTI Trustees decided to restore it back to its native prairie state so an "Ohio prairie grass & flower mix" was planted by FRTTI trustees Gordon Oney and Stan Bernhardt with the guidance of the Soil and Water Conservation Service. Native plants may look like weeds but they serve an important ecological purpose.

This mix of seeds started to take hold this summer with many flowers still blooming. And where there are flowers; there are birds and butterflies... lots of them!

Enjoy your stroll on our west-end trail as you watch American Goldfinches swoop to and fro the grasses and trees. Watch the trees, posts and utility wires for Northern Cardinals, Sparrows and Bluebirds as well as colorful butterflies that seem to appear out of nowhere and just as quickly, flutter on by... Speaking of bluebirds, we had another successful year on our bluebird trail. Although the wet spring was rough on all species, we fledged at least 9 bluebirds, 7 tree swallows and goodness-only-knows how many wrens!

Remember, there's some great nature to be seen on the trail every month of the year!



## ROAD SOLDIERS ROLL ON!

*by Lance Franke*

The Road Soldiers Cycling Club from OVH rode the FRTTI section of the NCIT from Bellevue to the Monroeville Station and back on August 11th. **17 Road Soldiers rode the trail, including two WWII vets!**, accompanied by FRTTI Board Members Gordon Oney (on his recumbent) and Stan Bernhardt (passing out cold water at the depot). Everyone made it to Monroeville but several rode the OVH van back to Bellevue at the Prairie Road Parking area. Following the ride, all 19 participants had supper at the Bellevue VFW Post #1238 and shared, with Post members the story of the trail and FRTTI, the Post's new neighbor. It is hoped that a new and building relationship between FRTTI and VFW Post #1238 may begin. On the next day, 12 August, seven Road Soldiers went to Collins, again in the company of Stan and Gordon, to do some brush cutting and debris clean up. The morning was followed by the Road Soldiers having lunch at the Monroeville American Legion Post #547. There, again, we talked trail with the Post members, the "in town" neighbors.

## 5K AT THE DEPOT *by Joyce Dupont*

Firelands Rails To Trails held their Bridge the Gap 5K run/walk on Saturday, May 14 at 9 a.m. The Depot Edition of this year's 5K began in Monroeville at the newly refurbished depot and headed west. Rain threatened the 137 participants that took part in the 4th annual 5k but held off till the festivities concluded. The first male runner to cross the finish line was Robert Littlejohn with a time of 19:00 and the first female runner was Ashley Smith with a time of 23:07 but everyone that participated was a winner! Thanks to the Ridgefield Twp. Trustees for their cooperation, the Monroeville Police for traffic control, and all the volunteers and sponsors who made this a great event.

*Ruff!*



## OVERLOOK GRAND OPENING

*by Rick Schaffer*

The new Norwalk Kiwanis overlook allows trail users, for the first time, to get a good view of the stone 1872 double-arch railroad viaduct they regularly ride across, and the east branch of the Huron River, thanks to the efforts of the Norwalk Kiwanis Club and benefactor Emilie Wells, who donated the funds in memory of her husband, John, a Kiwanian and a county extension agent.

Norwalk Mayor Sue Lesch, Huron County Commissioner Larry Silcox, and Retired Huron County Engineer Lawrence McGlinchy were among the dignitaries at the ceremony. Project Manager Jack Schaffer thanked the many people who donated labor and expertise. "It was successful because of the people and businesses in the community,"





# DEPOT OPEN HOUSE at Donald E. Morrow Park

Many a trail user has passed by the familiar green depot on the trail at Rt. 99 in Monroeville. Now is your chance to see what over 2,000 volunteer hours have accomplished and what these volunteers have planned as the trail develops in Monroeville and as depot restoration continues. This is still very much a work in progress! The exterior is roughly 50% done and the interior is roughly 60% done.

**Firelands Rails to Trails will host a Depot Open House at Donald E. Morrow Park on Sunday, November 6 from 1-4 pm.** Stop by and talk trail, talk bikes, talk horses, talk running, talk birds, talk trains, check out the big bridge, or just look around at the beautifully restored interior and the many interesting historical photographs.

Built in 1863, this depot originally served the Cleveland and Toledo Railroad and later the LS&MS and New York Central System. After the railroad left, the depot was home to various businesses before being sold by Pam Morrow two years ago for use as trail headquarters and a trailside historical interpretive center. Pam is now on our board and is active in the depot restoration through ideas, donations, and hard work.

FRTTI has typically spent one weekend a month, after completing on-trail work, to restore this gem. Every member of the FRTTI board and countless additional volunteers have put their skills and dollars to work. Fritz Kuenzel has done extensive foundation work, installed new windows, and created elaborate historical displays. Steve Siesel has spent countless hours on siding, woodwork, and trim. Rich Libbee has taken up residency in the attic wiring for new lights, a new furnace, and a new panel.

"Everyone has brought forth so many skills and so much passion for this old building", said Joe Mantey. "We are so excited to have such a wonderful place to call home and serve as a hub for trail activities. It was easy to get immersed in the project but we constantly reminded ourselves that trail building was and is our main focus. The dedication of so many found extra time and extra dedicated funds to restore this treasure."



Top: Steve Siesel (l) and Fritz Kuenzel (r) install new windows. "You know we're working on windows Ulysses S. Grant actually looked out?!", said Fritz. Bottom: The "Norwalk Branch" exhibit.



## PRESERVING OUR RAILROAD HERITAGE

Fremont native and famous railroad photographer Howard W. Ameling's many photographic works were unveiled in a ceremony at the former New York Central depot in Monroeville on August 4 by members of Firelands Rails to Trails, Inc.

Mr. Ameling's incredible photos are part of a trailside interpretive center being created by FRTTI showcasing the history of local railroads, as much of the North Coast Inland Trail is built on former railroad grades. Railroad historian and author James A. Semon, and his wife Bonnie, of Westlake, were the special guests representing the Ameling's, who now reside in Florida.

"Howard would be so proud to see his works so wonderfully displayed for all to see", said Semon after removing the giant sheet unveiling photos of massive Berkshire-type locomotives belching smoke and glossy streamlined passenger trains.

Howard W. Ameling was born in 1928 and grew up in Fremont. He served as a radioman in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. Howard is a retired U.S. Postal employee and has been involved with both the Nickel Plate and New York Central Historical Societies.

Howard began photographing trains in 1948 at the Chicago Railroad Fair. Over the years he and his wife, Dot, lived in four states and travelled in forty-eight states and parts of Canada to record, by 8mm movies, film, slides and still photos, railroad action, including structures, bridges, and equipment along the way.

His pictorial coverage of the railroads for more than sixty years has been donated to the Nickel Plate Road Historical and Technical Society as a collection of his life work, and includes the original movies, slides, and negatives, and is stored at Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio; as part of the Nickel Plate Road Historical and Technical Society archives.

Howard and Dot have recently granted Firelands Rails to Trails permission to display his images in the 1863 depot at Donald E. Morrow Park in Monroeville, alongside the North Coast Inland Trail.

FRTTI Trustees Joe Mantey and Fritz Kuenzel sorted through thousands of Howard's images to select some of the best. Trustees Jan Tkach, Pam Morrow, and Lisa Wendt carefully arranged the display.

"We hope this interpretive center can give trail users a brief history of Monroeville's railroads. There is a lot of history right out there under foot, hoof, or bicycle wheel", Mantey said.

Trail users may stop in the depot any time the "Open" flags are flying. The depot will host many trail events this year and next.



Howard W. Ameling



Left: Jim Semon (left) pulls down the cloth unveiling the new exhibit as Joe Mantey points to Howard's Nickel Plate photos.

# Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues: \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

\_\_\_\_ Student \$ 5.00

\_\_\_\_ Individual \$ 10.00

\_\_\_\_ Family \$ 15.00

\_\_\_\_ Club or Organization \$ 30.00

\_\_\_\_ Supporting \$ 50.00

\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$ 100.00

\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$250.00

\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Depot restoration fund \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

I would also like to donate:

\_\_\_\_ Labor \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Equipment \_\_\_\_\_

Detach and Mail this section.

Please make your check payable to:

**Firelands Rails To Trails, Inc.**

**44 East Main St. Norwalk, OH 44857**

Membership fees and donations to Firelands Rails to Trails are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

TN16

## The EXTRA BOARD .....The latest news and information

### View from the bridge!



High tide on the West Branch of the Huron River as viewed from our new trail bridge at Rt. 99.

**CONTACT US**  
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 www.firelandsrailstotrails.org

**HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

- Cut and mail the form above or visit us online and print the membership form.
- Join FRTTI for as little as \$5
- Sign up for our Email News
- Join us on one of our Work Days
- Tell some friends about it!

Thurs., Oct 6, 7:30 Board Meeting  
 Thurs., Oct 13, Night Bike Ride, 7pm at the depot. *Bring lights and your loose change as a depot donation.*  
 Sun., Oct 16, 8-12 Trail Work Day  
 Thurs., Nov. 3, 7:30 Board Meeting  
 Sun., Nov. 6, 1-4pm Depot Open House  
 69 S. Ridge St., Monroeville 44847

**TRAIL NEWS**  
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 Photos by Joe Mantey and Rick Schaffer, unless noted otherwise.



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