

Trackin' Fall & Winter 2022-2023 Edition

*Bringing you news and information about Chautauqua Rails to Trails that took place
in the Fall and Winter of 2022-2023.*



From the Locomotive

By Bill Ward, President

Greetings, trail pals! As you will see in this issue, we have been hard at work envisioning and completing projects at a pace on the far end of our hopes after beginning our comprehensive plan a few years back.

In this month's Trackin' are updates on everything from the Carroll trail completion, resurfacing of various trails, our trail connection efforts, new trail planning, ongoing planned events, hike opportunities, continued historical traditions, and general amazing accomplishments by our members as well as our gifted and energetic board of directors.

And now as Chautauqua Friends of the Greenways group begins to take form, our connection with the greater trail community elevates all of our efforts in a way we did not think possible a few years ago.

I could not be more proud of all of you for all you do. We are at once proud of our past and excited about the future. Thank you, trail community for your support and efforts to make our trails awesome.



Carroll Area Nature Trail Ribbon Cutting

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary



On October 29th, at 11am, the ribbon cutting for the grand opening of the Carroll Area Nature Trail took place.

Various dignitaries such as the trail club's President Emeritus Jim Fincher, Carroll Town Supervisor Russell Payne, John Lobb, and the son of Chautauqua Rails to Trails cofounder John Goodell (Andy) attended. Further attendees included trail lovers from across the county.

The two-mile segment is the first to be added in the south county to the organization's network. The rail-trail-turned-recreational trail extends from the land behind Lobb's Service Center at 129 West Main Street in Frewsburg to Riverside Road, not far from the entrance to the Audubon Community Nature Center. Celebrants gathered at the Lobb location.

With still more improvements to come, this accomplishment was brought about through the assistance of Town of Carroll officials, Mr. Lobb and other property owners. Mr. Lobb owns a large portion of the property surrounding the trail and his cooperation has been invaluable, especially in providing a much-needed parking area.

Christmas Eve Memorial Hike

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary



Our annual tradition of honoring those who lost their lives on Christmas Eve in 1872 as a result of the horrific train wreck near Prospect Station, was carried on a week later than our usual December 24th, in 2022. As many of you recall, Christmas weekend 2022 was historic due to the frigid blizzard that occurred in western New York, with Buffalo bearing the brunt of the worst of it. Our event was held on New Year's Eve instead, at the usual time of 2:00. Nonetheless, close to 60 individuals attended on the milder, yet rather rainy day.

President Emeritus Jim Fincher recounted the grim story and its causes—a story which gained national attention in 1872. He also explained how the trailside monument came to be created. Fittingly, current Chautauqua Rails to Trails president Bill Ward sang his original composition, “Christmas Eve at Prospect Station.” A surprisingly large group of attendees stayed to enjoy refreshments back at the trailhead, in spite of the light rain which descended upon the group.

We were reminded that trail lovers are weather-resistant by nature. If you missed it, please join us next year.

Sherman to Clymer Trail

By Patrick Johnson, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Liaison



We are constantly speaking with property owners between Sherman and Clymer to complete the Chautauqua Rails to Trail through our county. Currently, we have several landowners who have given us permission to use the railbed through their property, which amounts to approximately 6.28 miles of the railbed added to our trail. We have another landowner who is on the fence, but said if other landowners approve the trail through their property he would not oppose us using his property. That would add another 1.61 miles to the trail as well. We are also negotiating with one last property owner, and if they give us permission we can open the trail from Sherman to North Clymer.

There will be a lot of work to do to make the railbed usable in the first section heading south out of Sherman towards North Clymer. This is a beautiful section that will be well worth the effort to clean-up to make the trail passable. The rest of the trail from Bailey Hill Road to North Clymer is in very good shape and will require minimal upgrades.

Webb 2 Resurfacing

By T. John McCune, Vice President



In the fall, work was started to improve the next section of the Webb Trail. Grading, drainage, and some fill work was completed to help dry out the section of the trail as much as possible.

With the help of the Sheldon Foundation, we were awarded a grant to provide almost half of the funding needed for resurfacing this stretch between Morris Road and Route 430 near Mayville.

We're hoping to receive funding from another grant to fully fund resurfacing this stretch in late May/early June, so that it will be ready for everyone to enjoy in the summer.

A big thank you goes out to the Sheldon Foundation, Rock of WNY, and our members who have donated to help us with continuing to make big improvements to the trail.

Thom Wright Recognition

By Bill Ward, President

Thom Wright's contribution to Chautauqua Rails to Trails is Immeasurable, so his recognition as an outstanding board member is long overdue. Given his recent Herculean effort at managing the Carroll Rail Trail Project , we felt it was appropriate at our annual meeting to give him official praise for his work.

A gifted trail builder, Board member, visionary, and all-around "doer" Thom is invaluable. Thanks, Thom!



Virginia King Recognition

By Bill Ward, President

Virginia King was in rails to trails from 1992-1999 and was treasurer for 5 years then Sam Thorndike took over the treasurer position. She was there at the auction when we bought the properties from the railroad and walked the trails with John Goodell before our purchases. At our annual meeting Virginia was recognized for her outstanding service to Chautauqua Rails to Trails.



Nickels for the Rail Trail

By Thom Wright, Board Member

It's not our business what kind of beverages you like to drink, but an easy way for you to help CR2T is to drop off those empty containers at Southside Redemption Center or Don's Car Wash and donate them to the trails.

Just drop off your returnable cans and bottles and let the attendant know that they can add the total refund to the Chautauqua Rails to Trails account.

Southside Redemption Center

1752 Foote Ave, Jamestown, NY

Don's Car Wash

184 East Fairmount Ave, Lakewood, NY

How to Report Trail Maintenance Needs

For any trail maintenance needs, please contact us through the contact form on our website - <https://chaurtt.org/join-us/>

Follow Us on Social Media

For more information about the Chautauqua Rails to Trails, please like our page on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ChautauquaRailsToTrails>), or follow us on Instagram (ChautauquaRailstoTrails).

If you tag us on social media, please use the hashtags #CR2T and #chautauquarailstotrails

Check Out Our Website!

For the latest and greatest information, check out our website at www.chaurtt.org

Third Saturday Co-Sponsored Hikes

By Judy Takats, Membership Coordinator



We continued to hold our 3rd Saturday Hikes co- sponsored by the Chautauqua Hiking Club.

These hikes are a great opportunity to get some exercise, meet new people and learn more about the plant & bird life and history of our area.

We try to keep these hikes 'family and pet friendly' so we usually hike 3 – 4 miles. (1 ½ -2 hrs)

Please let us know if you have a special interest (birds, plants, insects ...?) and would like to lead us on a nature informative hike.

As always, your membership in CR2T keeps you on our “events list “ and this fall we will be adding more hikes and events.

If you need to renew your membership, please go to our website and follow the links to membership/donation.

Monday Group Hikes

By Judy Takats, Membership Coordinator



We have our Monday Morning Hikes year round starting at 9:30 AM. Please join us and feel free to bring a friend.

The hikes typically take place on Chautauqua Rails to Trails, with some other trails occasionally being selected during winter or hunting season.

If you would like to be put on the Monday hiking list, please contact Judy Takats, our Membership Coordinator, at jtakats@gmail.com.

Mary Jo "MJ" Albert



Long-time CR2T Treasurer Mary Jo "MJ" Ellen Shaw Albert, 87, of Mayville, passed away peacefully at her home on Friday, February 10, 2023, following a lengthy illness.

She was born October 29, 1935, in South Bend, IN, the daughter of the late Spencer L. and Edna Klinedinst Shaw.

MJ was a 1953 graduate of Chautauqua Central School and earned an associate degree in Interior Design from the Rochester Institute of Technology.

She had worked as an Administrative Assistant for the American Institute of research in Washington, DC, and was also the Finance Manager for the Town of Chautauqua for many years. Her family was some of the original founders of the Chautauqua Institution and they continue to be active members of the community through their successful family business; Shaws's Laundry/Ministers Union, currently managed by third generation family.

MJ was a member of the Chautauqua Rails to Trails and the Chautauqua Women's Club at the Chautauqua Institution acting as treasurer for both groups. In her younger days, she was quite the artist. She also enjoyed reading books, antiquing, traveling, interior designing, and spending time with her family. She was loved by so many, and the matriarch of her family. She will be deeply missed by all.

A memorial service will be held at 11 AM on Saturday, June 10th, 2023, at the Hurlbut Memorial Community United Methodist Church (21 Scott Ave, Chautauqua, NY 14722).

Volunteers Needed

By Judy Takats, Membership Coordinator



Volunteers are always welcome and needed for helping with events such as our annual wine walk, holiday party, Christmas Eve memorial, 5K summer runs, selling T-shirts at events ... (all of course when we can get together again), trail maintenance (clearing fallen trees, inspecting culverts, etc...), mowing the grass at trail heads, shoveling snow at crossroads, distributing trail maps at our kiosks and many other jobs.

If you have a special trail in mind for a 3rd Saturday hike or would like to lead a hike we would love to hear from you. If you have a special knowledge of plants, mushrooms, birds or wildlife (not bears) we'd love to have you lead us on an informative hike! Contact Judy Takats at jtakats@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer.

Chautauqua Gravel Grinder

By Patrick Johnson, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Liaison

SAVE THE DATE: August 12, 2023 the Chautauqua Rails to Trails will host the Chautauqua Gravel Grinder, a fundraiser to help us expand, improve, and maintain the Chautauqua Rails to Trails and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail that runs through Chautauqua County.

We are offering three rides: Sherman to Brocton and back (48 miles); Sherman to Mayville and back (20 miles), and Sherman to Summerdale and back (10.5 miles). There will be food, drinks, and entertainment in Sherman.

Registration opens Wednesday, February 8th! You can register at <https://www.bikereg.com/chautauqua-gravel-grinder>

More information will be coming out soon. Please pass the word. We hope to see you there!

Officers Elected at Annual Meeting

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary

Utilizing the change in our by-laws to hold our annual meeting in November instead of September, the Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers which were entirely incumbents this year, on November 7, 2022. Until next November the officers are:

President—Bill Ward of Mayville
Vice President—T. John McCune of Fredonia
Treasurer—Virginia King of Sherman
Secretary—Wendy Lewellen of Bemus Point

Judy Takats of Portland agreed to once again serve as Membership Chairperson.

Since Our Last Trackin’

By Wendy Lewellen, Secretary

It was the consensus of the Board of Directors that we change our By-Laws in order to hold our Annual Meeting in November rather than September. At that meeting we reelected the slate of officers.

We staged a successful grand opening of the Carroll Area Nature Trail on a perfect fall day, October 28, 2022. The C.A.N. Trail is a two-mile addition to our system, and the only one in the southern part of Chautauqua County.

President Ward’s efforts with the D.O.T. yielded the completion of one of two prominent crosswalk designations in Mayville. We anticipate the crosswalk at Rt. 430 to be completed in the spring.

Exceeding our goal, CR2T netted \$5,800 in the GiveBigCHQ fundraising effort sponsored by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation. This was partially achieved by sizable matching funds of significant contributions from two of our former presidents—Dr. Robert Berke and Jim Fincher.

New signage met the needs of alerting trail users of the location of the 1872 Christmas Eve Train Wreck Memorial on the Ney Trail from both directions (at Fish Road and Bliss Road); Bob Lannon erected them.

Other signage was erected to alert trail users of the newly shortened Bill Sharp Portage Trail in Mayville.

Board member Patrick Johnson’s efforts to negotiate with relevant property owners with the goal of connecting Sherman to Clymer, showed significant progress. Mr. Johnson continued to serve as our liaison to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance.

Two new “flip” signs served us well to alert trail users of the inaccessibility of the trail connecting the Baer Trail to the Fincher Trail for September 1 through December 31 due to hunting considerations.

The bulk of the Fincher Trail improvements were completed, and we look forward to a grand reopening in the spring.

Efforts continued in our quest to avoid having to utilize Ellicott Road in Brocton, and to rehabilitate the actual railbed in that vicinity.

Jacob Bodway and Bill Ward remained heavily involved in the Friends of Chautauqua County Greenways.

Membership chair Judy Takats continued to coordinate the 3rd Saturday Collaborative Hikes with the Chautauqua County Hiking Club.

We utilized financial support from the Sheldon Foundation to make needed improvements to wet spots on the “Webb Two” Trail—between Morris Road and Route 430.

The annual tradition of commemorating the 1872 Train wreck near Prospect Station was successful, in spite of having to reschedule it to New Year’s Eve due to the memorable snowstorm at Christmas time, and in spite of having to endure a light rain as we ate sweets and enjoyed hot drinks.

A low-key holiday celebration was enjoyed at our December meeting, as we were delighted with the presence of 16 guests.

In order to reflect dramatic changes in our trail map by indicating (1) the addition of a one-mile trail extension from School Street to Fuller Road in Brocton, (2) the addition of the two-mile C.A.N. Trail, and (3) the sizable reduction of the length of the Sharp/Portage Trail, new revised trail guides are being produced.

Current CR2T Board of Directors

Bree Agett, Jamestown

David Akin, Mayville

Jacob Bodway, Bemus Point

Dee Dippel, Bemus Point

Patrick Johnson, Lakewood (Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Liaison)

Virginia King, Sherman (Treasurer)

Bob Lannon, Mayville

Wendy Lewellen, Bemus Point (Secretary)

T. John McCune, Fredonia (Vice President)

Tom Miller, Maple Springs

Elsa Nelson, Lakewood

Judy Takats, Portland (Membership)

Bill Ward, Mayville (President)

Dena Ward, Mayville

Thom Wright, Jamestown



Friends of Chautauqua County Greenways

The Facebook group is for anyone interested in the trails of Chautauqua County, including waterway trails, hiking trails, biking trails, snowmobile trails, equestrian trails, and winter trails (skiing, snowshoeing). Feel free to post pictures of trails and wildlife (flora and fauna), historical landmarks, videos of wildlife or whatever catches your eye, trail conditions, and trail updates to keep everyone informed. You can share gear recommendations, buy/sell or trade outdoor gear, and ask about trail difficulty and best routes. We hope that the page serves as a connection between all user groups and outdoor enthusiasts who live, work, or play in Chautauqua County.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1166550607137711>



Support The Efforts of CR2T!

____ Yes, I want to support CR2T's effort to change the abandoned rail lines of Chautauqua County into multi-use trails which can be enjoyed by all.

____ Individual	\$25	____ Sustaining	\$100
____ Family	\$40	____ Benefactor	\$500
____ Patron	\$60	____ Sponsor	\$1000 & up
____ Business Partner	\$100/\$200 per year for 10 years		

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Detach & mail form to: Chautauqua Rails to Trails,
P.O. Box 151, Mayville, NY 14757. *Thank you!*