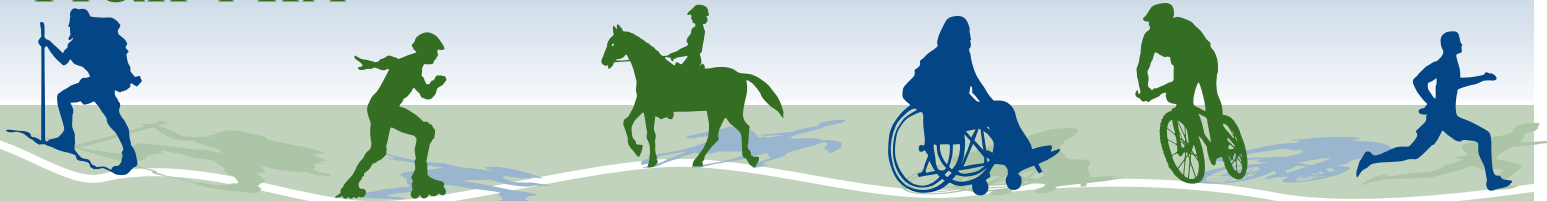


Trail Mix The Newsletter of the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island



Volume 7, No. 4

Fall 2008

Greenwords:

GARI brings back Trails and Greenways month for another year

The response to the first annual Trails and Greenways Month last year was outstanding. Based on that success, we are bringing you another September full of biking and hiking events that feature many of last year's favorites, as well as a variety of new choices that should encourage you and your family to get out on the trail.

This year, we include hikes across the state from West Greenwich to Smithfield, weekly Wednesday evening bike rides along the East Bay Bike Path, and even a Grandparents' Day event. We hope you will take the opportunity to enjoy several events on our trails and greenways in September.

In an effort to make sure everyone will have a chance to join in the fun, there are even more evening and weekday events this year. If you want to try cycling for the first time, or revisit the freedom of traveling on two wheels, join the Old Spokes or a Wednesday night ride on the East Bay Bike Path or the Recycled Cyclist ride on the South County Bike Path. Everyone in the family will enjoy a bike ride on the Blackstone Bike Path guided by a member of the Blackstone Bike Patrol.

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Beach Music to kick off GARI Trails Month

September is a wonderful time to be outside, hiking, biking, even paddling with friends and family; the air is crisp, the humidity is gone and the cooler nights are perfect for relaxing after a day of fun on our trails, greenways and blueways.

All events listed in our special insert happen in September – Rhode Island Trails and Greenways Month. Check the individual listings (and our website, www.rigreenways.org) for details so you can plan out your month. Then you can clear your calendars of chores and have fun!

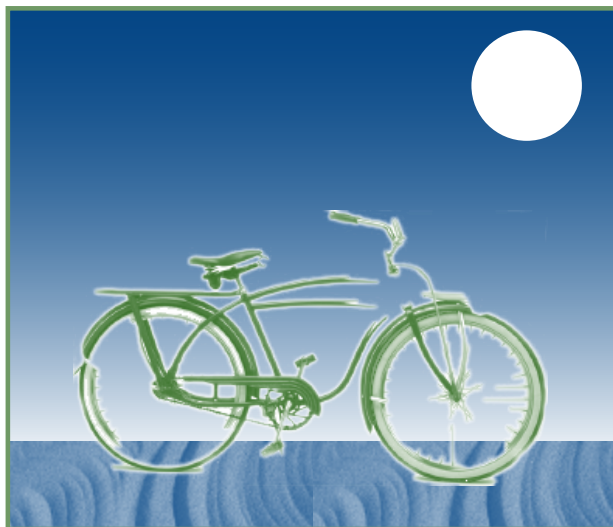
To get things rolling, we're inviting you to bike with us from the Park & Ride in North Kingstown (where Heffie's restaurant used to be) to Narragansett Town Beach. The

ride is approximately 5 ½ miles and takes us along wide, flat roads with great views of Narragansett Bay and Pettasquamutt Cove.

Once we get to the beach, Joe Parillo will strike up his big band so we can dance in the sand. Bring a picnic supper and a beach towel to take full advantage of the late summer beauty of the Rhode Island seaside. It will be dark by the time we've shouted for the encores, so you should bring a headlight, headlamp or flashlight for the ride back.

If you need a bike to enjoy the month of rides, but don't have one in tip-top shape, read our piece on bicycle renting on page two. That list is a starting point, as there may be other good businesses in your neighborhood for renting a bike for these events.

Of course, after participating our month of rides, hikes and paddles, you just may want to continue with the fun of enjoying the outdoors. Consider joining GARI to help support the development of greenways in Rhode Island and to continue receiving *Trail Mix*, so you'll be in the know about greenways and blueways.



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Greenwords

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Also included in this issue is a list of local shops that have bicycle rentals. When you get on your bike, make sure to wear a helmet and choose pants short enough that they won't get caught in your bike chain. Bring sun screen and water.

We are also pleased to offer even more hikes this year: there are several offered every weekend. You can enjoy a walk along the Ten Mile River Greenway or the Washington Secondary Bike Path in Coventry. No special equipment is needed for the hikes. Just remember to wear good walking shoes, bring bug spray, sunscreen and a bottle of water.

September in Rhode Island is a delightful time to be outdoors. We hope you will join us to enjoy many of our events during Trails and Greenways Month.

Sue Barker **GARI Chair**

Trail Mix is the quarterly newsletter of the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island (GARI).

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Rules of the Road

Bike Path

- Bicyclists and In-line Skaters - stay to the right.
- Walkers and Joggers - stay to the left (facing bicyclists)
- Cyclists have right of way.

On-Road Bike Lane

- Cycle in single file on the right side of the road.
- Use hand signals before you turn.
- Always check behind you before changing lanes or turning.

Safety

- Wear a helmet. Helmets are required on all riders and passengers age 15 and younger in RI and 12 and younger in MA.
- Don't use headphones.
- Use reflective gear and clothing at dusk or nighttime.

Bicycle rentals

If you want to fully enjoy our Rhode Island Trails and Greenways Month, but don't own a bike, consider renting one.

Below is a list of reputable businesses where you can rent a bicycle for the day. (There may be other such businesses throughout the state, as well.)

Hope to see you on the bike path!

- Canoe Passage Outfitters, 277 Water Street, Warren, (401) 245-9025 www.canoepassage.com
- East Providence Cycle, 414 Warren Ave., East Providence, (401) 434-3838 www.EastProvidenceCycle.com
- Narragansett Bikes, 1153 Boston Neck Road, Narragansett, (401) 782-4444 www.nxbikes.com
- Northwind Sports, 267 Thames Street, Bristol, 02809, (401) 254-4295 www.northwindsports.com
- Pedal Power Bicycle Shop, 879 West Main Road, Middletown, (401) 846-7525 www.pedalpowerri.com
- Providence Bicycle, 724 Branch Ave., Providence, (401) 331-6610 www.providencebicycle.com



The ten-mile greenway bike path in Pawtucket is a wonderful ride -- and a wonderful walk.

Dear Dr. Sprocket,

Dr. Sprocket will answer questions in each issue of Trail Mix.

Q Dear Dr. Sprocket, I love bicycling and am an avid supporter of bike paths and greenways. I bicycled over 1500 miles while living in MD, and recently relocated to RI. I am a conservative cyclist and find I feel safer riding on the sidewalks in many areas, because the bike paths and bike lanes are often 1) intermittent, 2) poorly maintained, 3) poorly marked, 4) poorly lit, and 5) barely separated from motorized traffic.

What are the laws in RI about bicyclists on sidewalks? What can I do to have a better bike path/bike lane experience?



Safer on the Sidewalk

A Dear Safer, I share your feelings of vulnerability when cycling on a road with motorized. To alleviate my fears, I try to ride on the road very early in the morning (when few cars are out), use a rear view mirror on my left handlebar, always wear a helmet, stay alert, and practice extreme defensive riding techniques. Most of my riding, however, is done on one of the many bike paths that we are lucky to have in RI.

In addressing your concerns, I will use both the rules and regulations contained within the RI Department of Transportation guidelines (available at <http://www.dot.state.ri.us/bikeri/>) and my own riding experience over a 60-year period (all but 20 of those years within RI).



Bicycle safety is very location dependent. For example, during the off seasons, roads on Block Island are sparsely used and very safe. In Providence, and many densely-populated cities, rush hour traffic creates dangerous situations for all users. If you have to travel during those times, it might indeed be safer to ride very cautiously on sidewalks than on the street. I would advise you to wear bright clothing so that you are more visible to pedestrians while riding on sidewalks, and more noticeable to automobile drivers while crossing streets. It might also be wise to mount a small flag on the back of your bike – anything to become more noticeable.

While you may feel somewhat safer on a sidewalk, that alternative has its own downsides. While it IS legal to ride your bicycle on sidewalks in RI, you have to exercise a lot of caution to avoid hitting pedestrians.

continued on next page.

GARI accomplishments

Our members and supporters:

- > Cooperate with other bicycle and trails groups to support trail and greenway development and to promote bicycle safety.
- > Communicate with state department directors to encourage improved bicycle and pedestrian resources.
- > Coordinate and promote September as Rhode Island Trails and Greenways month.
- > Participate in other state and national trails and environmental support programs.

www.rigreenways.org

Fall 2008

Get on the trail:

GARI is dedicated to improving conditions for cyclists, hikers, and pedestrians and increasing the number of greenways statewide. Your membership makes this newsletter possible and enables us to continue working with state and local leaders to ensure Rhode Island has an integrated, well-maintained network of alternative transportation recreation resources.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip _____

E-mail _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____

Organization _____

Annual Membership enclosed

- Individual \$15
- Family \$25
- Nonprofit \$50
- Corporate \$100
- Other: _____

Please return membership form with check payable to the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island to: GARI, 31 Stanchion Street, Jamestown, RI 02835.

Please tell me about GARI meetings by

- E-mail
- Regular Mail
- Neither

Dear Dr. Sprocket,

continued from previous page.

Additional hazards await both pedestrians and cyclists on sidewalks (cars backing out of driveways, uneven surfaces, overhanging tree branches, slippery patches, sharp objects that cut tires and knees, dogs, etc.). While you may feel safer on a sidewalk, any collision (with a pedestrian, tree limb, or errant garbage pail) can cause unbelievable injury, pain, and suffering. Probably most hazardous to cyclists is their higher average speed relative to pedestrians. Many drivers backing out of driveways watch out for pedestrians, but few drivers expect cyclists to appear suddenly and may not see them in time to stop.

When you ride on the left side of the road (against traffic), in addition to disobeying the biking guidelines of RI laws, you run the additional risk of not being seen at all by motorists

entering an intersection or backing out of a driveway. And, even though cars on the road are typically going faster than cyclist, simple physics dictates that no matter what the speed limit for autos is, you are less at risk if you are riding in the same direction as the cars.

While the existing network of bike paths within RI does not allow contiguous off-road travel within and between major work and recreational centers, many of the individual paths provide wonderful corridors within cities and rural areas. Most serve as gateways to scenic natural areas and offer ways for families to be with and enjoy nature at no or low cost. In addition, they provide safe places for children to learn how to ride and a better chance to connect with the natural world. With the increased cost of gasoline and other essential items,

bike paths will become an even more important recreational resource for everyone.

The current economic environment doesn't bode well for continued development and maintenance of bike paths and bicycle routes within RI. That makes it all the more important for everyone who uses the bike paths to become an advocate for their creation and maintenance. You can help by contacting your elected representatives, supporting groups that advocate for bike path and bike route initiatives, and generally speaking out in support of greenways, bike paths and bike lanes.

I hope this helps you feel safer while bicycling in Rhode Island. I invite you to come to our monthly meetings and participate in our efforts to make RI a more bicycle-friendly place to ride.

Send your Dr. Sprocket questions to rigreenways@rigreenways.org.



Calendar of Events: Rhode Island Trails and Greenways Month

Special Issue!

www.rigreenways.org

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