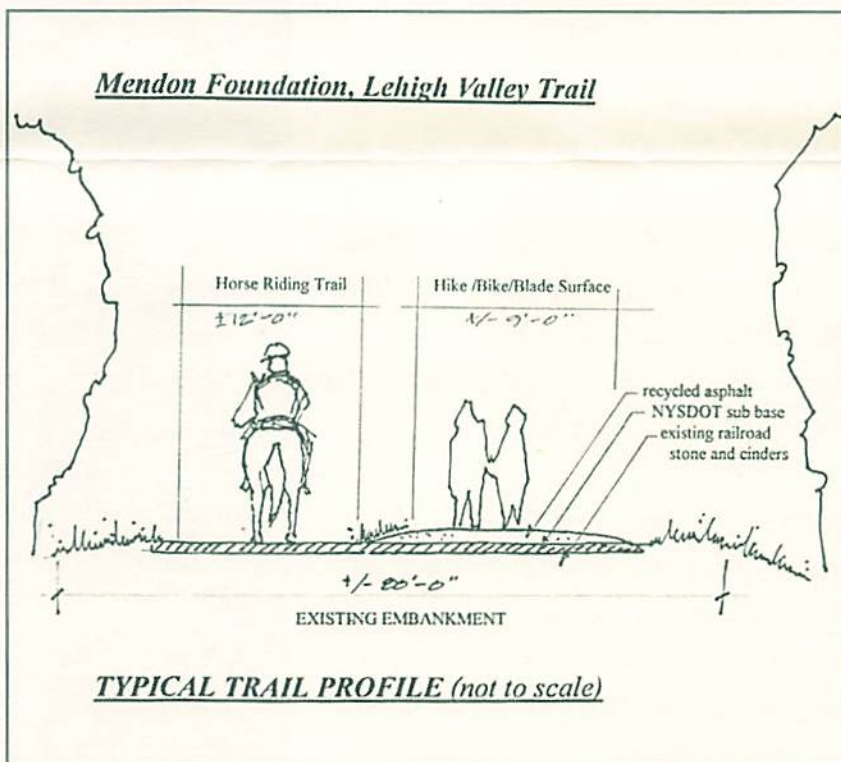


## WE'RE RANKED #1

The Mendon Foundation and Monroe County Parks Department are truly pleased that our Transportation Enhancement Program grant application is ranked number one for this region. That is not to say that we have been approved to receive \$846,833 in Federal Funds, but we have cleared the regional hurdle.

In the spring of this year, a committee of Mendon Foundation members and representatives from the Monroe County Parks Department met for many hours and prepared an application for funding to improve the Lehigh Valley Trail. The team of Carl Foss, Dick Dehm, Ron Brand, Karen Hopkins, Paul Booth, John Streeter, Richard Williams, Mary Hamilton-Dann, and Joe Spezio worked with Allen Cassidy, David Rinaldo, Eileen Kennedy and Louis Amico in developing the application. Federal funds, in the sum of \$846,833, are requested, to be matched by a local commitment of \$346,646 in materials and funds.

The enhancements to the trail bed would include using the railroad cinders along the bed, adding to it recycled coal cinders contributed by Eastman Kodak and topping it off with recycled asphalt from highway reconstruction projects in our region. Additionally, the bridge over the Genesee River would be redecked and ramps constructed so that the Genesee Valley Greenway Trail would be connected to the Lehigh Valley Trail.



We are truly pleased with the number one ranking from the Genesee Transportation Council and the NYS Department of Transportation Region 4 staff. Our application will now undergo full New York State Department of Transportation review. Final results should be known in January 2000.

We look forward to being able to complete these significant enhancements to the trail if funds become available.

# ROADSIDE KILL

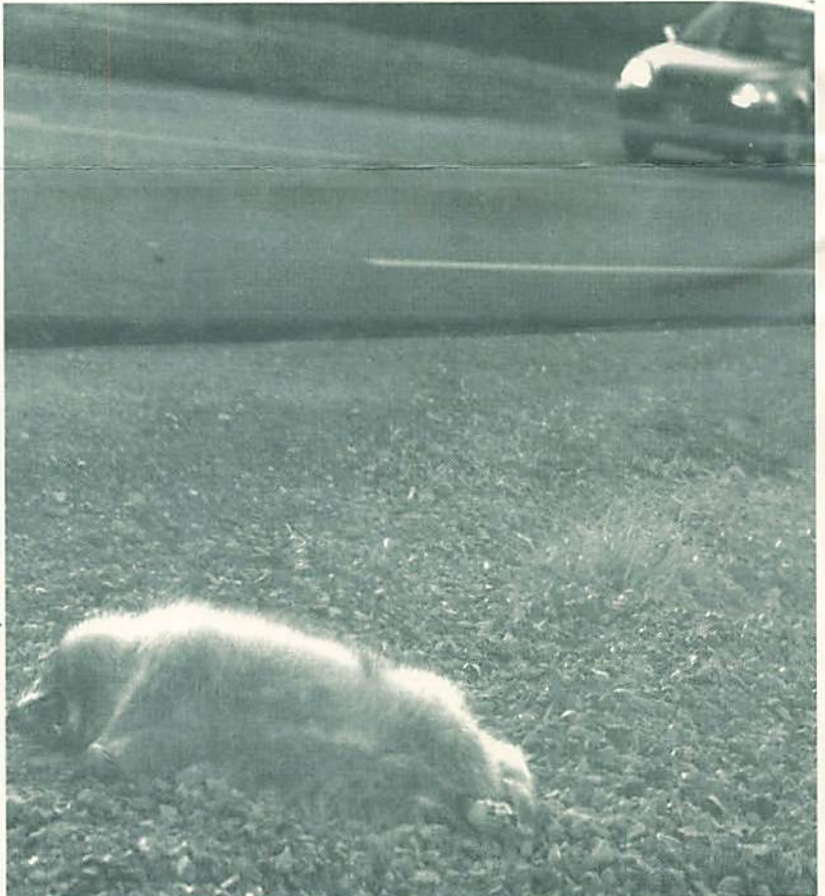
By Amelia Seiler

Picturesque rural countryside, open fields, park land, ponds, woods, and an abundance of wildlife, it is an aspect of Rochester's rural areas that residents can appreciate daily as they drive. Some of us channel our appreciation into active membership in the Mendon Foundation and other Projects geared to foster and preserve wild areas. Others of us simply enjoy the ever-changing panorama that nature provides, hoping that the land stays wild, that developments grow in someone else's backyard, that our roads don't become major thoroughfares, and that urban sprawl creeps insidiously in other directions. But whether we actively or passively value the rustic quality of our life, we have a responsibility toward the wildlife that inhabits our natural surroundings.

In the month of May, just on one Mendon road, an entire litter of foxes, a fawn, three skunks, numerous raccoons, ground hogs, chipmunks, birds, snakes, and squirrels have been killed by cars. Add it to the slaughter on the other highways in the area, and the toll becomes significant.

Some may say that wildlife in the area is too prolific, others may say that wildlife casualties are inevitable when civilization encroaches. But the fact remains that few of us drive the established speed limits on our rural roads and fewer still are mindful of the animals that may run in front of oncoming cars.

By preserving natural areas for our own enjoyment we are also encouraging wildlife to live around us. It is, therefore, our responsibility to give that wildlife a chance on our roads, especially in the summer months when animals are first learning survival skills.



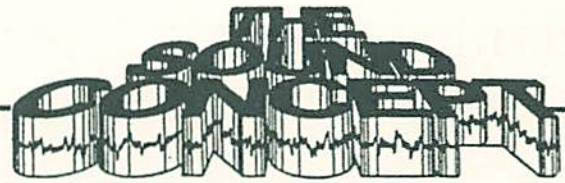
# New Members

The people and businesses listed below have supported us by becoming new members since our last issue.

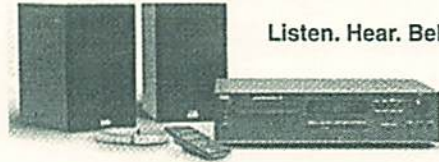
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## ★ MENDON FOUNDATION ★ MISSION STATEMENT

The Mendon Foundation is a non-profit corporation established to:

**PRESERVE**, protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and structural resources in the town of Mendon and directly adjacent properties,

**MAINTAIN** a responsible stewardship of assets and properties help or controlled by the corporation,

**ESTABLISH** and promote local environmental education on issues pertinent to the preservation of natural resources in the Town of Mendon.

**ESTABLISH** and promote programs to monitor the natural resources in the Town of Mendon

As we succeed in these objectives, we enhance property values for all Mendon property owners. The Foundation is supported by membership fees, grants and other contributions. Donations to the Mendon Foundation are tax deductible.

Proceeds are used to cover easement acquisitions, monitoring and communications.

All labor is volunteer.

# Mendon Forests Then, Now, and in the Future

Franz. K. Seischab

On the “Map of Phelps & Gorham’s Purchase 1790” within the outline of the Town of Mendon there is stated “Part of this tract are sold to Sam Franklin & Wm. Wadsworth”. So what was it that Franklin and Wadsworth had purchased in the late 18th century? Original survey notes indicate that the landscape was covered with a mixed hardwood forest. The upland forest on moist sites was predominantly beech and sugar maple with a mixture of elm (probably slippery elm), basswood, oaks and chestnut. On drier upland sites were forests of oaks (red, black, and white), hickory (bitternut and shagbark primarily), red and sugar maple with some chestnut.

The survey records indicate that bottomland forests

were composed of basswood, butternut (probably walnut, as well) with sycamore and cottonwood along streams. Wetlands were predominantly American elm, black ash, and silver maple. Surveys indicate some wetlands as containing alder, “swamp brush” and some as “sunken morass”, usually a reference to cattail marshes. Along the western township line of Mendon, approximately 7.3% of the area was in some sort of agricultural fields. These were described as being “open field, 60 rods over” and “cleared field, 80 rods over”. Surveyors did not indicate whether the fields were those of Europeans settlers or of native Americans.

continued on page 5



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## Mendon Forests Then, Now, and in the Future continued

Where have all of the beech-maple forests gone? These were the forests on the best agricultural sites and so they were removed and farmed for 200+ years. The forests that we see today are found on those sites that were too steep, too wet, or with soils too shallow to plow. That is not to say that they haven't been cut periodically for timber or fuel wood. There's a second kind of forest seen in the township today, namely the forests that are developing on abandoned farmland. A considerable amount of white ash saplings, red stemmed and silky dogwood shrubs and the ever present grape meandering over everything else can be seen in these developing forests which represent the early stage of the forest which is to come. Where are the beech and sugar maple in these fields? Beech is suffering from beech bark disease, introduced from Europe. The maples struggle against browsing by deer. Will these communities ever become mature forests? I doubt it. Not if the present development of the township continues. Then what will the forest of the future look like?

Remnants of the original forests will remain on sites too steep or too wet to build on. If you'd like to see what most of our forest will look like in the future, I suggest that you drive observantly through the village of Pittsford. What you see there and what you will see increasingly in Mendon is an urban forest. Forest remnants will be invaded by invasive aliens like black locust and honeysuckle.

As the town becomes more suburban, plantings of non-natives will increase. Species like Colorado blue spruce, Norway spruce, Norway maple, Austrian and Scotch pine will increase in planted hedgerows and windbreaks and as lawn plantings.

There will be an increase in North American species usually found in other locations of the Eastern Deciduous forest; species like honey locust and black locust as well as the silver maple varieties with deeply cut leaves usually found in more southerly States. Conifers like white spruce and white pine will also increase. That is, if the deer will allow the white pine to survive. Oaks that seem to be selected by suburbanites are usually scarlet, post and pin oaks. Invasives like the Tree-Of-Heaven will also spread through waste places. It has already gotten a start in the City of Rochester. I have avoided making judgmental statements about the future forests in Mendon. The above are, however, the trends that this plant ecologist sees taking place.



# A Little Night Music

by Amelia Seiler

Gray Tree Frogs found in our area are distinguished by partially webbed feet, large toe pads, a warty, blotchy dorsal surface, and an impressive Latin name. Their trilling night song is similar to that of the red-bellied woodpecker. If you've heard them but never seen one, don't be surprised. *Hyla Versicolor* is a species considered cryptic and difficult to find.

In low temperatures these small amphibians are a dark charcoal gray. In the sun they can turn a silvery gray but may also be green. A distinguishing feature is the bright orange or yellow color on the hidden surfaces of their thighs and a light spot beneath their eyes.

Our resident tree frogs are nocturnal. They forage in trees and shrubs, and, unless they fall out of a tree, as one did at the feet of our editor, they descend only to breed.

Their breeding season runs from April to July, depending on temperature. Eggs are laid on the surface of still water, and tadpoles that survive the threat of water snakes, raccoons, fish and other frogs become frogs within a range of 45 to 60 days.

Once in the trees, Gray Tree Frogs sing late into the night and are said to indicate thunderstorms with their melodic call. At the moment they are threatened only by natural predators and are not on any endangered lists. So hike our trails. Perhaps you will hear them singing, and, who knows? You might be lucky enough to actually spot one of our elusive, my inclined tree frogs.



Front row: Laura Geary, Debbie Spillane,  
Middle row: Karen Pike, Paul Ziegler  
Back row: Jennifer Franklin, Dawn Grove, Dawn Shafer

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# Keeping a Safe Trail

The Lehigh Valley Trail is a county park, hence motorized vehicles are not legal to operate on the Trail. As we've stated in previous articles, please help to keep the Trail safe for all users by letting the authorities know if you see or hear motorized vehicles on the Trail.

If you see or hear a problem, just call 911 and let them know what you observe. Don't be afraid to call as frequently as you spot a problem, the authorities need our help.

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Fall 1999