

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has." -Margaret Mead

# PATHWAYS

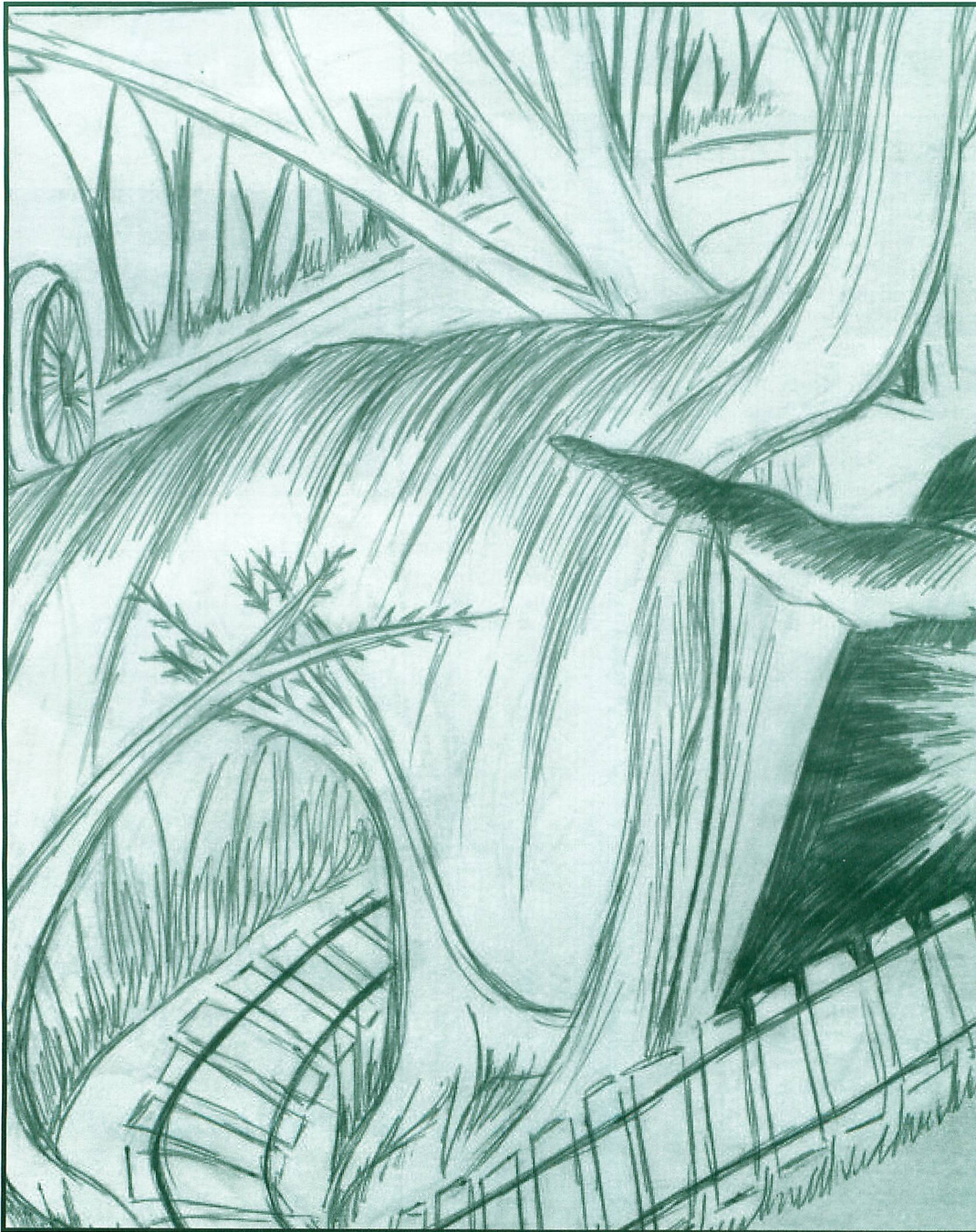
VOL 15 NO 2

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MENDON FOUNDATION

FALL 2008

A Member of the National Land Trust Alliance

[www.MendonFoundationInc.org](http://www.MendonFoundationInc.org)



## Mendon Station Festival Poster Contest Winner!

**Victoria Shorey** is the 2008 Grand Winner with her black and white drawing depicting a stylized version of Mendon's features. Victoria is a student in Mrs. Recktenwald's 10th grade class at HF-L High School.

### Inside:

MENDON STATION FESTIVAL EVENTS & TIMES • EARLY LIFE IN MENDON  
SCOUTING CONSERVATION PROJECT • 2ND ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE  
AMERICAN ELM RETURNS TO MENDON • TRAIL NEWS AND VIEWS





**2008 MENDON STATION FESTIVAL  
EVENTS & TIMES**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**

**11 AM - 5 PM**

- Artists & Craft Vendors
- Good Food at the Food Court (Best Hamburgers in Town)
- HF-L Student Art Show
- Scouting and Robotics Demonstrations
- Mendon Historical Exhibit with Town Historian - Diane Ham
- Farrier (Horse shoeing) & Large Animal Vet Demonstrations
- Icelandic Horses and Miniature Donkey on Display

**12:30 - 4:30 PM**

- Pony Rides (1:00-4:00 PM)
- Horse Drawn Wagon Rides (along the Lehigh Valley Trail)
- Miniature Train Rides

**11:00 - 1:00 PM Dressage and Western Riding**

**1:00 - 2:00 PM Music - Young Irish Dancers**

**2:00 - 2:45 PM Music - The Bob Squad**

**2:45 - 3:15 PM Horse Harnessing and Driving Exhibition**

**3:15 - 4:15 PM Music - The Bob Squad**

**4:15 - 5:00 PM Trick Mini Horse (as seen on Animal Planet TV)**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**

**12 PM - 5 PM**

- Artists & Craft Vendors
- Good Food at the Food Court (Best Hamburgers in Town)
- HF-L Student Art Show
- Scouting and Robotics Demonstrations
- Mendon Historical Exhibit with Town Historian - Diane Ham
- Farrier (Horse shoeing) & Large Animal Vet Demonstrations
- Icelandic Horses and Miniature Donkey on Display

**12:30 - 4:30 PM**

- Pony Rides (1:00 - 4:00 PM)
- Horse Drawn Wagon Rides (along the Lehigh Valley Trail)
- Miniature Train Rides

**12:00 - 1:00 PM Dressage and Western Riding**

**12:45 - 1:30 PM Pet Parade**

**1:00 PM The Clown Show with Mr. Beau**

**1:30 - 2:00 PM Music - Young Irish Dancers**

**2:00 - 2:45 PM Music - The Bob Squad**

**2:45 - 3:15 PM 4H Equestrian Drill Team**

**3:15 - 4:00 PM Music - The Bob Squad**

**4:00 - 5:00 PM Mendon Pony Club - Games & Jumping Exhibition**

**5:00 PM STUDENT ART CONTEST AWARDS**

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# Early Life in Mendon

By Diane Ham,  
Mendon Town Historian



The first roads west from the Atlantic Ocean were the natural waterways. Before the Native Americans set foot on our soil, wild animals made trails along these waterways—the lakes, rivers and streams. Our Native Americans eventually used these same trails because they led to salt licks and other places where water, food and materials could be found for making clothing. These trails followed the lines of least resistance—a most valuable feature for future travel. In selecting these trails, the natives avoided rough, stony ground and dense undergrowth, if possible. Our early settlers eventually followed these trails in the late 1700s, but they had to be widened to allow the passage of the packhorse, and later, the wagon. There were two trails across the state of New York—the Mohawk Trail and the Great Western Turnpike.

The Mohawk River Valley was the primary route west through eastern and central New York. The Mohawk Trail followed the Mohawk River for about 100 miles. It was also known as the Iroquois Trail and traversed territory once occupied by the Iroquois Confederacy. The Mohawk River's

headwaters were at Oneida Lake.

From 1770 the Mohawk Trail was a wagon trail. Pockets of settlement were built along the Mohawk River leading into western New York: Albany, Schenectady, Rome, and Utica. At Utica the road forked toward the south and was known at that point as the Great Genesee Road. This road went to the Genesee River and on to Ft. Niagara, which was approximately 195 miles. It became a stagecoach route in 1804 and was opened from Albany to Auburn. West of Waterloo, the trail followed what is now US 20 through Geneva, Canandaigua, Lima, Batavia and on to Lake Erie.

Canandaigua was located on the north end of Canandaigua Lake. It was built up on the site of a Seneca Indian village which was destroyed by General John Sullivan in 1779. After the revolutionary war, the whole western part of New York, centered on the Mohawk Trail, was opened to settlement. The remaining Iroquois were forced out and pushed into small reservations. The new government held 18 million acres of land taken

from the Iroquois. Out of this, a military tract of over 1.5 million acres was set aside in the Finger Lakes area for war veterans, who had been promised free land for their services. Some families moved into the area immediately, not waiting for the legal right to do so. Many more waited until 1790, when the townships were laid out and named. At that time, lots were awarded to veterans or to those who had bought veteran's rights.

After purchasing from Massachusetts all of New York State west of Geneva, Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham appointed William Walker as their agent. He opened the first office for land sales in America in Canandaigua. The first party of settlers to Western New York was led by General Israel Chapin. They arrived in May 1789, and within two years the town was overrun with emigrants from New England who were moving west over the Great Western Turnpike and the Great Genesee Road.

After settlement of a dispute between New York and Massachusetts over ownership, the rest of the land westward from the Finger Lakes to Lake Erie was also opened up for settlement. Much of the land was bought by investment companies, including the Holland Land Company, which bought up the fertile Genesee Valley.

It was a rather long trip across the state of New York in early days. There were many problems that settlers faced as they plodded across the state to their chosen new home.

They were only able to travel about 25 miles in a day. Often times, wagons got bogged down on muddy, rutty

*continued on next page*



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roads. Food ran short. Before the trails were crowded with settlers moving west, families were often attacked by wild animals. Sometimes their horses were killed. Sometimes they were attacked by Indians on the war path.

If these early trails crossed a major waterway, they would not have been passable during all seasons of the year. Thus, many pioneers preferred to travel in the winter which enabled them to cross rivers, swamps, etc. Heavy wagon loads of personal belongings could be moved more easily on runners over the frozen ground. In the spring, wagons tended to get mired in the swampy areas and were difficult to pull over the rutted or often rocky trails.

According to Candace Beach, in her diary written in 1815, she tells that it took her family fifteen days to move their belongings from Hartland, CT to Leroy, NY. Her description about their trip is interesting:

Monday, August 14, 1815: This day I shall leave the place where I spent my youthful days to go among strangers. May we be prospered in our journey and be contented with our new home. Monday eve: Our friends have been very kind today, they "shewed" themselves friends. They accompanied us about eight miles on our journey and bade us adieu perhaps forever. We have rode 27 miles today and put up at Bards Tavern in Becket.

Saturday, Aug. 19th: We came through Little Falls, a beautiful village, and Herkimer, the most beautiful village that I ever beheld, the houses principally white and most beautiful shade trees. Farmington (CT) is nothing compared to this place of beauty.

Wed., Aug. 23rd: We rode 25 miles today through the Indian Village. Some were dressed very handsome in their fashion and some of them were almost naked.

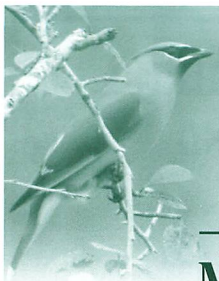
Friday, 26th: We crossed the Cayuga Bridge, which is quite a curiosity being one mile and a half in length.

Sat., 27th: This morning we arrived at our home (at LeRoy) and a good one, I believe. The family that we bought of have not moved out of the house yet. Mrs. Binson has a young babe. I feel very lonesome not being acquainted here."

These words could have been written by hundreds of women as this same pattern was repeated over and over again in the next several decades. There was great sadness experienced in leaving home and friends, the pleasure of finding attractive established villages in unknown land or the sudden realization at the end of the journey that the emigrant was alone in a completely new and untried environment.

Mendon's first settlers arrived in 1791. There were only about 20 families by 1795. By 1820, our population was 1,435. These settlers moving to Mendon would have traveled on whatever trail took them to Albany. From Albany, their trail overland would have passed through Schenectady, Rome, Utica, Auburn, Waterloo, Geneva, Canandaigua, East Bloomfield, and then north to Mendon and Norton's Mills. In spite of everything, most families reached their chosen destination in New York State successfully. By hard work they prospered, developing their new homeland into a worthy heritage for the coming generations. (More about early settlements of E. Mendon and Norton's Mills (Honeoye Falls) in the next issue of "Pathways").





## Letter to the Editor

# MENDON FOUNDATION BIRDING OUTINGS MOST ENJOYABLE



*I was fortunate enough to attend two out of four Saturday morning bird hikes organized by the Mendon Foundation in May. Although I am not a "natural early morning riser", the walks were most enjoyable and well worth the extra effort to arrive bright and early at 6:30 AM.*

*Those attending enjoyed not only the common bond of searching for and identifying birds, but also the thrill of being introduced to some of nature's finest parkland treasures right in our own community. Our group was diverse in age ranging from elementary students to retirees but we enjoyed our intergenerational exchanges and brunches after the hikes.*

*Stewart Ackerman was a very helpful and knowledgeable guide and assisted me in expanding my personal birding list from 30 up to 45 species within two short weeks. I also experienced the satisfaction of a new found camaraderie with fellow birders enjoying the pursuit of bird watching and identification through sight and sound.*

*I would like to thank Arlene Cluff and the Mendon Foundation for organizing these events. Also, after having developed a fuller appreciation and sense of indebtedness to those generous individuals kind enough to donate their property to the Foundation, I thank you, one and all.*

*Connie Kellogg*

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## SECOND ANNUAL NATIVE TREE, SHRUB, WILDFLOWER AND WOODLAND

# Plant Sale

The Mendon Foundation is sponsoring a native plant sale including trees, shrubs, woodland and wildflower plants supplied by Jim Engel of White Oak Nursery, Ellen Folts of Amanda's Garden and the Mendon Foundation. They will provide expert advice on plant selection and ways to attract songbirds and wildlife to your natural garden landscape.

**DATE: Saturday, June 7, 2008**

**TIME: 9 AM – 1 PM**

**LOCATION: Mendon Station Park, located in the Hamlet of Mendon at the corner of Pittsford-Mendon Rd. (Rt. 64) and Rush-Mendon Rd. (Rt.251) behind Cibi's.**

A percentage of the proceeds will benefit the Mendon Foundation. For more information contact Arlene Cluff @ 624-3182 or e-mail @ [ajcluff45@aol.com](mailto:ajcluff45@aol.com)





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# Local Scouts Plant Trees, Clear Brush from Mendon Station Park!

## More than 100 Scouts & Family Members Join Pack 105's Annual Conservation Project



*Cubmaster Christopher Carosa and Den Leader/Project Co-Coordinator Erik Van Bork survey the work crews as they prepare the area where the pine trees were planted behind Benincasa during Pack 105's Annual Conservation Project. More than one hundred people participated in helping the Mendon Foundation clear a large portion of Mendon Station Park.*

In what's become one of Mendon's finest traditions, Pack 105 held its annual conservation project on the sunny Saturday morning of April 19, 2008. This year, several Girl Scout Troops as well as members of Boy Scout Troop 105 and Cub Scout Pack 10 joined the fun. With more than 100 people participating, Pack 105's 2008 Conservation Project represented one of the largest area events this Earth Day weekend – and on a school break to boot!

“Scouting's emphasis on Conservation of natural resources predates Earth Day by almost 60 years,” explains Pack 105 Cubmaster Christopher Carosa. “It's all about being a good citizen, and that means more than ‘helping little old ladies across the street’ – it means respecting wildlife and managing the environment. It's a theme as old as Scouting itself.

In fact, the Boy Scouts of America awarded its first wildlife conservation award in 1914!”

Besides clearing brush, the young workers – with help from their parents and other adult volunteers – planted several evergreen trees behind Benincasa to provide a natural shield between the home for the terminally ill and the traffic on the popular Lehigh Valley Trail. “It's amazing how much work can get done in a short period of time,” said Warren Wallace, Mendon Foundation Director and scout project coordinator. This is the sixth year in a row the Pack has performed work for the Mendon Foundation as part of its annual conservation project. “It was a lot different six years ago,” explains Pack 105 Den Leader and Co-Coordinator of the event Bonnie Coddington. “Back then, there was tons

of rubbish and a lot of overgrowth. Also, it snowed on that April day!” The temperature for this year's event was in the comfortable 70's.

Maybe it was just Mother Nature's way of saying ‘thank you’ to the many scouts and adult volunteers who spent a couple early morning hours making Mendon look even more marvelous!

Post Script: At its Annual Blue and Gold Banquet in May of 2008, Otetiana Council presented Pack 105 with the Unit Conservation Good Turn Certificate for this year's project.



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# American Elm Returns to Mendon



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Then, in the early 1930's – disaster struck! Dutch elm disease carried by a tiny beetle came to our shores with a load of elm logs from Europe. By the 1950's over half of our elms were lost to this devastating disease. Included were all the towering elms that provided a canopy over East Avenue.

The Elm Research Institute, a nonprofit organization was established to develop a disease resistant "American" elm. In 1984 they introduced their American Liberty

Elm. It is the only street proven American elm and it carries a lifetime warranty against Dutch Elm Disease.

The Mendon Foundation has been awarded two 14-19 foot trees to be planted in Honeoye Falls and the Hamlet. Boy Scouts' Troop 10 and Troop 105 will be planting the elms later this summer, participating in the Institute's Liberty Tree Memorial program.

The Mendon Foundation has been awarded the opportunity to make available these elms to Mendon area residents. The large trees with big root balls can be shipped in groups of seven at a sharply reduced cost.

Visit us at the Mendon Station Festival for more information



# Foundation applies for a Transportation Enhancements Program Grant

The Town of Mendon (as Sponsor) and the Mendon Foundation (as applicant) joined together in June to apply for a Federal Transportation Grant of \$523,000 for the construction of two extensions of the Lehigh Valley Trail and restrooms at Rochester Junction. The first extension would extend the stone-dust trail south from Rochester Junction over the both the east and west wye trails, through the Great Bend Nature Park to a parking area on Clover St. The second extension would extend the Lehigh Valley Trail west from the Genesee Greenway, over Foundation land, to a parking area at River Rd. Both these enhancements will greatly improve trail access, while also providing for safe off-road parking.

The his and her restrooms would each be approximately eight foot square and meet all federal, state, and county standards as well as being ADA compliant. They would be equipped with electricity and running water, thereby allowing for ventilation fans, sinks, flush toilets and an outside drinking fountain. Award announcements for these much sought-after funds are expected in December.



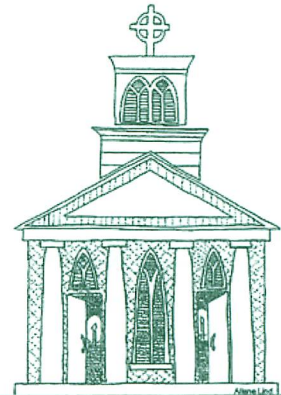
Lima PTA chooses the Leigh Valley Trail for it's end of school Ride and Walk.

## St. John's Episcopal Church

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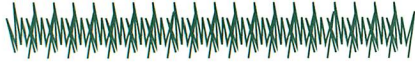
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# Trail News

## Trail right-of-way cleared in Mendon's Great Bend Nature Park

Working closely with the Town of Mendon, the Foundation arranged for, supervised, and assisted a crew from the Groveland Correction Facility in clearing the heavily overgrown Rail-Trail corridor in the southern half of the Great Bend Nature Park. Initially, this section of the Lehigh Valley Trail (when opened) will serve Park users as a connection to the southern end of the Nature Park's Riverside Trail. Longer term, it will also become a connecting link in the extension of the Lehigh Valley Trail south from Rochester Junction into the Village of Honeoye Falls.



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## Improvements at Mendon Station Park

Another Groveland inmate crew spent a week in Mendon Station Park pruning trees, clearing brush and building a retaining wall and railing for the ramp. Our relationship with Groveland has proven to be a great force multiplier. In 2007 they contributed about 450 man hours of work on the trail, mostly clearing heavy brush at Rochester Junction. This year we are scheduled to receive 700 man hours. This support enables us to significantly expand the Foundation's trail development work.





# & Views

## Report on Trail Feasibility Studies

### Caledonia Trail Study

The study examining the feasibility of extending the Lehigh Valley Trail (LVT) to the Village of Caledonia neared its completion, with the Engineer's report at a Caledonia public meeting on March 4th. The report concluded that the use of the old Lehigh Valley RR corridor was not viable due to a variety of factors including private land ownership, and the mining out and chemical contamination of parts of the corridor. The study did find that extending the trail .6 miles west from the intersection of the LVT and the Genesee Greenway to River Rd., on the Foundation's property, was a viable and a desirable alternative, since it would provide user parking and access for both the LVT and the Greenway on River Rd. in the Town of Caledonia..

The Mendon Foundation has already started to seek grant funding for this extension of the trail.

### Honeoye Falls Trail Study

The Genesee Transportation Council has advised us that, the first meeting of the Honeoye Falls Trail Study Steering Committee is expected take place in late March. This study will determine the feasibility of extending the Lehigh Valley Trail south from Rochester Junction through the Village of Honeoye Falls, to the Monroe County Line.

## PATHWAYS

is the newsletter of the Mendon Foundation, a completely volunteer organization which exists with the generous support of its members, volunteers, and contributors. This newsletter is published three times a year and paid for through the generous support of our advertisers.

### The Mendon Foundation

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### OUR PURPOSE

To improve the quality of life in our community.

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. Our phone: 585-624-8730

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- Mendon Station Park
- Community Playground
- Mendon Hamlet
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