

The GPTN Newsletter is published quarterly and is distributed to GPTN members and other interested parties.

For more information, contact: Elaine Hammer, 402-477-0242, or www.gptn.org



Great Plains Trails Network

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Great Plains Trails Network

Spring 2015

Issue 119



Drawing by Oliver Herford (1863-1935)

It's Trail Trek! And It Is The Thirteenth!

by Roger Hirsch

But we don't believe in superstitions.

This year's event features four trails – 8-mile, 16-mile, 28-mile, and a 50-mile repeat trip to Cortland with an add-on from Beatrice for our growing number of biking friends in and around that community. The 8-, 28- and 50-mile tours will start from Haymarket Park and go initially through Lincoln's new Haymarket area—a loop that will take riders past the Pinnacle Arena, down to N Street, back on Canopy Street, over the “LINCOLN” bridge and on towards the northern- and eastern-bound trails. Riders on the 16-mile and Cortland rides will leave the loop half-way through at N Street's junction with Canopy Street.

The 8-mile trail is especially designed this year for families with younger children. Its turn-around point will be at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center where sponsors have planned special events and activities for the kids. Entertainment will be provided by “one-man band” Dave Marsh, and Nichole Tichota will do face-painting. Kids will be able to make name plates for their bikes and get their hands “tattooed”. The Lincoln Southeast Cheerleaders will be on hand to help. Snacks will be available. Then its a short ride back to Haymarket by UN-L for lunch and the ever-popular bike drawings.

The 16-mile ride returns Trail Trek to Pioneers Park after several years, this time on newly designed and paved trails. Recently paved Jamaica North promises a smooth ride down to Bison Trail and the new Bison Trail Bridge over Haines Branch. Then it's on to Pioneers Park and its new trails, past the famous bronze buffalo in Harris Circle and all the way to the Nature Center for refreshments and entertainment by The Midnight Wanderers with its folk, country and bluegrass music. A return trip to the Haymarket and lunch will be along the same route – just in case you missed something!

And the 28-miler? It includes a trip through the Highlands-Fallbrook-Stonebridge area that was introduced last year, with a segment that will take riders east on Superior to the Murdock Trail and Mahoney Park, down 84th to the Novartis trailhead, and then it's all downhill on the Mopac Trail to the Haymarket and lunch. Refreshments will be at the Novartis Trailhead.

For serious bikers, the 50-miler to Cortland brings bikers down Jamaica North, onto Homestead and south to Cortland.

Continued on Page 3

Black cats may cross our trail, and we don't flinch. Salt is often spilled at GPTN events, and no one bothers to throw it over a shoulder. We throw chain letters into the waste baskets. Jumping on cracks is a favorite sport, and our mothers' backs are just fine. We shrug our shoulders if a \$2 bill comes into our possession. Horse shoes? Who needs 'em. Horoscopes....bah!

And Las Vegas Hotels may eliminate the 13th floor from their high-rise views of the nation's gambling mecca....but not Trail Trek!

GPTN's favorite family, fundraising community event – Trail Trek! – is its thirteenth year in 2015. Always the last Sunday in June, this year's event is June 28th. As has been the case in recent years, Trail Trek will start at Haymarket Park, 403 Line Drive Circle, with staggered times depending on the length of the rides.

This year's major sponsors include (in addition to GPTN) The Lincoln Journal Star, The Bike Rack, Cycle Works, Cornhusker Bank, KX96.9, HyVee, 106.3KFRX, Lincoln Surgical Hospital, John Blumer Wells Fargo Advisors, Pepsi and SouthPoint Pavilion.

Registration forms are available in Lincoln cycle and other stores, and online at GPTN's web site: www.gptn.org.

Put Lincoln on the Map!

The N Street Protected Bike Lane will provide a two-way protected bike lane on N Street. It links the Jamaica North trail at 4th and J Street with the Antelope Valley Trail.

The connection will offer easy, safe access to downtown businesses and the Haymarket district. GPTN is raising \$340,000 to support this once in a life time opportunity. Let's continue the Great Place legacy!

Make contributions payable to: Nebraska Trails Foundation

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Designated Project: _____



Mail to: GPTN
5000 North 7th St.
Lincoln, NE 68521



Great Plains Trails Network

since 1988

dedicated to the goal of developing a network of commuter and recreational trails within Lincoln and Lancaster County

2015

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WWW.GPTN.ORG

Newsletter comments, questions, corrections
gbentrup68@gmail.com



A Note from the President

As GPTN peddles into 2015, I want to thank our previous officers for their service. Karen Griffin as President, Corey Godfrey as Vice-president, Jamie Warren as Treasurer and Bill Wehrbein as Secretary have been our guides for the past two

years, and we are very grateful for their steady stewardship. All of them remain on an experienced and dedicated Board of Directors and will continue to participate in fundraising, community events, government relations and other activities that help us build Lincoln's trails network. Corey stays on, this time as Secretary, and carries over valuable insights from the previous administration.

In addition to Corey and me, Dena Noe will serve as Vice-president and Damon Hershey will be GPTN's Treasurer.

Since GPTN's annual meeting February 22nd, we've reworked our committee structure. We have seven standing committees now—Administration, Finance, Fundraising, Government Relations, Public Relations, Trail Use and Activities, and TrailTrek! GPTN is a “ground-up” organization, and it relies heavily on active committees to drive its activities.

GPTN is currently in its 27th year and much of its success is due to the longevity of board memberships. While individual directors come and go, we would be remiss if we did not specifically mention GPTN's loss of one of our original founders—Beth Thacker. Beth was there at the beginning when GPTN formed in 1988, and has been a champion of Lincoln's trails system at every level of our organization. Beth and her husband Dan are leaving Lincoln to return to Boulder, Colorado to take over her father's real estate business. If only GPTN's reach extended that far. We will miss Beth not only for her dedication and professionalism, but for the close individual relationships she formed with all of us. Beth, you served GPTN and Lincoln very well, and we are very grateful.

And what does 2015 hold for Lincoln's trails? The big one, of course, is the construction of the N Street Protected Bikeway. It is currently under construction, and we have penciled in an October completion. The protected bikeway will be unique to Nebraska, open up downtown Lincoln to safe bicycle traffic, serve downtown attractions, businesses and residents, and help cyclists to get from, well, here to there. GPTN is currently working on its \$340,000 commitment. Pardon us while we remain focused during 2015 on helping this project be completed as it was originally designed. It is one of GPTN's largest commitments ever.

Check out the calendar for the many upcoming events this year. It should be a memorable year for trail use. Mount up. Ride safely.

Roger Hirsch

GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Jan 26, 2015 – April 20, 2015

Welcome to New Members: Tom Anderson, Donna Awtry, Jill Brown, Debbie Buck, John & Eileen Carroll, Ernesto Castillo, Rebecca Clark, Brent Davis, Terri Dreier, Terri Rotolo Hatch, Becky Hrght-Moravec, Stacey Hoffman, Cynthia Hollister, Kevin Lanka, Michaella Kumke & Ariana Kennedy, Louis Lemon, Joe Long, Tom Peel, Rice Family, William Rowell, Shela Shanks, Hink Sahs & Heidi Schulz, Bev Sprouse, Jacob Thiessen, & Angie Wagner.

Thank you to renewing members. You are the reason that GPTN continues a strong program in support of trails. Jack Higgins & Su Allen, Margaret Allington, Mary Amen, Erik & Carol Ann Anderson, Joan Anderson, Kevin Bachman, Bev Barry, Mary Barry, Rod & Debbie Basler, Chris Baum, Maxine Bishop, Peter & Ann Bleed, John Blumer, Pat Bonge, William Bonacker, Tim & Lynn Borstelmann, Carolyn Collier, Jon Curran, Jim Craig, Dave Scoby & Donita Consbruck, Deb DeFruite, Don Dingman, Gene & Andrea Dinkelman, Curt Donaldson, Kathryn Dolanl, Terry & Judy Dougherty, Theodore Durant, Hess & Nancy Dyas, Steve Danahy, Jason & Maggie Davis, Mike & Bonnie Engel, Stu & Denise Essman, Gene & Colleen Eubanks. Larry & Peg Fletcher, John Foote, Barry & Lisa Forbes, Lynn Frankowski, Mildred Gardner, Brandon Garrett, Matt & Laura Gersib, Robert Geschwender, Larry Gregg, Karen Griffin, Clarence Gunn, Heartland Optical, Mary Heidrick, Kathy Helzer, Kent & Lisa Henning, Damon Hershey, Ann Heydt, City of Hickman, Sandra Hilsabeck, Marie Hitz, Arnold Hottovy, Steve Hubka, Al Jensen,

Courtney Jerke, Dick Johnson, Sarah Janiak, Sitaram Jaswal, DuWayne Johnson, Nancy Johnson, K. Kane, Donice & Tom Kaspar, Todd Kellerman, Jeff & Heather Kimble, Sarah Kohlhof, Carey Taylor & Alison Krohn, Art Knox, Marshall & Gail Kohtz, Allan & Mary Kay Koontz, Barb & Mark Kortum & Ed Kouma, Jean Lake, Carla Lasley, Sue & Randy Leach, Roger Lempke, Jim & Doris Lewis, Lynn Lightner, Jim & Gail Linderholm, Christine Lodes, Tess & Dean Lesoing, Therese Liegl, Vera May Lutz, Jim Mack, Bob Mancuson, Lynn & William Marienau, Christine Marvin, Ed May, Michael & Liz McCoy, Ronald & Laurie McKenzie, Edith Meints, Jordan Messerer Family, Gretel Mientka, V.T. & Joyce Miller, Peter & Lorie Morin, Craig Nelson, Kristi Newcomb & Topher Hansen, Bill & Jan Norris, Mark Orr, Connie Parrish, Lois Paschke, Ted Parsons, Sheppard Perkins, Jon Peterson, Cary & Lisa Peterson, Bryan & Shaunda Poppe, Teella Poppe, Tom & Kris Powers, Benjamin Rader, Mike & Peggy Rasmussen, Mike & Melissa Renn, Bryan Rettig, rich & Susan Rodenburg, Dalcyce Ronnau, Greg Rosenboom, David & Martha Rowe, Ed Rumbaugh, Dean Cole & Cindy Rutan, Fred & Virginia Schelert, Brian Scusa, Dennis & Carla Seeba, Paul Smith, Kent & Ann Seacrest, Charles Shambarger, Jerry & Jo Stanley, Gayle & Mary Starr, Del Stuefer, Mrs. John Stewart, Joe Sweeney, Gregory & Margaret Sutton, Neal & Lois Thomas, Bob & Mary Torell, Ron & Darlene Tussing, Vicki Valente, Hendrik & Barbara Van Den Berg, Monica Vandergnend, Lyle & Joyce Vannier, Mike & Susan Vint, Michael & Jane Voorhies, Kevin Wailes, Joy & Rex Walton, Paul Wisnieski, Kathryn Vitte, Lyn & John Willey, Roy & Crolyn Wolgamott, Don & Mary Lou Wright, Joeth Zucco, Cassidy & Madison Whitney, Brad & Elisa Znamenacekl, and Rick Zubrod.

Thank you from the 2015 GPTN Board of Directors. Your memberships are crucial to GPTN's efforts.



Back row (L-R) Jordan Messerer, Corey Godfrey, Roger Hirsch, Steve Dunbar, Karen Griffin, Greg Rosenboom, Bill Wehrbein.

Middle row (L-R) David Scoby, Parks Coble, Marynelle Greene, Mary Torell, Gary Bentrup, Dale Arp, Beth Thacker.

Front row (L-R) Joyce Vannier, Carolyn Collier, Elaine Hammer, Ron Case, Dena Noe.

Not Pictured: David Burd, Jim Carveth, Chris Heinrich, Kris Sonderup, Ann Ringlein, Brett Baker, Damon Hershey, Bob Torell, Jamie Warren, Ray Stevens, Jr.

Lincoln Track Club Membership Application

The Lincoln Track Club, Inc. was established in 1975 by an eager group of track enthusiasts. Although our title contains the reference to track, we have become a distance oriented club. Our membership includes some of the nation's finest road racers as well as a great number of fun runners.

In essence, our club is a nonprofit community service organization, established to promote running throughout this area and provide educational assistance for its runners. Our quarterly newsletter has become an informational running publication for local runners. The LTC is a member club of both the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) and USA Track and Field.

The Lincoln Track Club is not just about running. It's also about volunteering. This is the one ingredient that makes LTC work. The whole organization is made up of volunteers and we can always use more. Please consider joining one of Nebraska's finest volunteer-run organizations.

LTC members receive entry forms for all LTC races, *FastTimes* (our newsletter, which is e-mailed quarterly), an invitation to our annual meeting, a one dollar (\$1.00) discount off the entry fee of each LTC road race. All memberships expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).

2015 LTC Calendar

3/28	State Farm (10M/5K/1M)
4/11	Novartis (10K/2M)
5/2	Mayor's Run (1M)
5/3	Marathon/Half-Marathon
6/6	Havelock (10K/3K)
7/12	Lincoln Mile
7/19	Uplifting Athletes Run (5K/1M)
8/8	Thunder/KFOR (5K/1M)
9/13	Buffalo (5M)
10/25	Governors (15K/5K/1M)
12/6	Holiday Run (5K)

To join the Lincoln Track Club: <http://www.lincolnrun.org/>

Join us for the
**DEDICATION AND
DONOR RECOGNITION**
of the completed
JAMAICA NORTH TRAIL
Saltillo Road to "J" Street
FRIDAY MAY 8, 2015, 5 PM
6TH AND VAN DORN
(under the Van Dorn viaduct)

Please park at 2600 Park Blvd, Suite One
(Nebraska ONE Volleyball)

For more information call (402) 441-7939.

There will be an organized bike ride leaving
Suite One at 4:30pm.



Support Lincoln Trails

By donating to the
Nebraska Trails Foundation
through the:



**Community
Services Fund
of Nebraska**

www.communityservicesfund.org/

It's Trail Trek! And It Is The Thirteenth!

Continued from Page 1

As in previous years, lunch and entertainment will be available in Cortland at the city park, and there will be a radio link to keep riders advised on the progress of the bike drawings. Chris Sayre returns for the third straight year to provide entertainment at Cortland.

Missing this year are segments into Southeast Lincoln along the Billy Wolff and Rock Island Trails. Route planners considered those popular routes, but the City of Lincoln plans on a significant Billy Wolff trail reconstruction project along Capitol Parkway between Randolph and 27th Street. Uncertainty about when construction might start on that critical link meant it was too close a call on whether bikers would be able to bike through the area. Watch for a route along Capitol Parkway in 2016!

Bikers are always free to design their own bike treks, but volunteers are not available for bike support on such trails. As always, registered trekkers must wear a helmet, even if they plan their own trails.

Registration fees have remained the same--\$20 per rider 13 and older, \$10 for kids 12 and under, but kids 5 and under are free! Early bird registration is until June 21st. After then registration costs go to \$25 and \$12. All trail packets must be picked up at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center on Saturday, June 27th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. That is also when riders register

for the free bike drawings. Extra T-shirts are \$6. Late registration is always possible at Haymarket Park on the day of the event.

Registration fees include a T-shirt, water bottle for the first 1,000 registrants, snacks, minor mechanical repairs at SAG stops, and lunch. Once again, Trail Trek will include a corporate challenge event, with three classes of corporate sizes. There will be a bike drawing in each class in addition to the 20 bikes that will be given away during a drawing following the event. Attendance is not required at the drawings.

No one connected with Trail Trek gets paid for their efforts. It is 100% volunteer supported, so if you would like to volunteer, go to GPTN's web site, follow the Trail Trek link and look for the "Volunteer Sign-Up" button. Volunteers get lunch and a volunteer T-shirt without cost.

All proceeds from the event will go to GPTN's fundraising efforts on behalf of the N Street Protected Bikeway, which is under construction. GPTN committed to raising \$340,000 for the unique bikeway.

And don't forget those free bicycle drawings sponsored by Cycle Works and The Bike Rack! We'd tell you "Good Luck"....except we aren't superstitious.

NORTHWEST
Saturday, JUNE 6
2:00pm 12 MILES
Meet at the
Trails Center (21st & Q)
Union Plaza Park

NORTHEAST
Thursday, MAY 28
6:00pm 16 MILES
Meet at the
Trails Center (21st & Q)
Union Plaza Park

SOUTHWEST
Thursday, MAY 21
6:00pm 14 MILES
Meet at the parking lot
east of Auld Center
(A St. & Memorial Dr.)

SOUTHEAST
Thursday, MAY 14
6:00pm 13 MILES
Meet at the parking lot
east of Auld Center
(A St. & Memorial Dr.)

**TOUR
de lincoln
2015**

**Explore Lincoln
on the trails!**
Each ride features a
different quadrant
of the city.

Refreshments 15 minutes before each ride.
Shorter options available. For weather
cancellations, gptn.org. No registration fee
is required, just show up ready to ride!
Helmets please.

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For more information visit gptn.org or call Marynelle, 402.429.2034 or Joyce, 402.570.8469.

GPTN ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Great Plains Trails Network (GPTN) was held on Feb. 22 at CHI Health NE Heart Medical Office. Brent Davis, with the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance (NeBA) presented on NeBA's efforts, including their work on legislative bills to enhance bicycling safety. Julia Harris, formerly with Live Well Omaha will be the new executive director for NeBA. Krista Dittman from Branched Oak Farm discussed their plans for their café at the Jayne Snyder Trail Center which will open later this year. Terry Genrich, assistant director for Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, reviewed progress made on the trails in 2014 and trail projects under way. The trails system is 131 miles in length, and includes 85 miles of commuter/recreation trails, and 46 miles of hiker/biker trails in parks.

GPTN's board member, Marynelle Greene was awarded the GPTN Trailblazer award for her work through the years supporting Lincoln's trails system. Project awards were given to Dena Noe for her work on the GPTN's new website and to Lyle Vannier for his efforts as treasurer of the Nebraska Trails Foundation. Karen Griffin was honored for her service as GTPN president for the past two years. Thanks Karen for your great leadership! The Trail Boss award is given to administrators, planners and others who take leadership in implementing trail projects or plans. The Trail Boss Award was given to Ari Kennedy with the Lower Platte South NRD for her work on the Salt Creek Levee Trail extension. Thanks Ari and thanks to CHI Health NE Heart for hosting our meeting.



The Trail Boss award being awarded to Ari Kennedy by Elaine Hammer



Join the University Sertoma Club of Lincoln as they sponsor their 15th Annual Oak Creek Valley Bike Ride on **May 17, 2015** starting in Valparaiso, Nebraska, located only 18 miles north of Lincoln on Hwy 79. Ride the trail, or enjoy riding through the beautiful Bohemian Alps.

Choose from several distances of 24, 31, 39, 44, 46 or 70-mile routes of highways through the Bohemian Alps, paved county road or the stretches of natural prairie on the Oak Creek Trail. This ride is a fundraiser benefiting many sponsorships of University Sertoma. Proceeds will benefit Prescott Elementary School in Lincoln, Camp Sertoma for children with hearing disabilities, and other charities.

Find more details at www.bikeride.sertoma.net. So come out for a great ride and support a good cause! For further information and the entry contact Kathy Anderson at dkanderson@windstream.net 402-430-6084 or contact Don Freeman at 402-499-3500 dfreeman69@neb.rr.com.

give

To Lincoln Day
May 28, 2015

GPTN, through the Nebraska Trails Foundation, will participate in the Lincoln Community Foundation Give to Lincoln Day. Every donation you make on May 28th helps your favorite charities even more because they will also receive a proportional share of the \$300,000 challenge match pool! **To donate:** <http://givetolincoln.razoo.com/>

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BICYCLING LINCOLN™

BicycLincoln is a community group that supports and promotes bicycling in the city of Lincoln. Our mission is to provide information and a unified voice for bicycle advocacy in an effort to make cycling in Lincoln more friendly, safe, easy, accepted, and "so that more people bike and bike more often."

Check them out at <http://bicyclincoln.org/>



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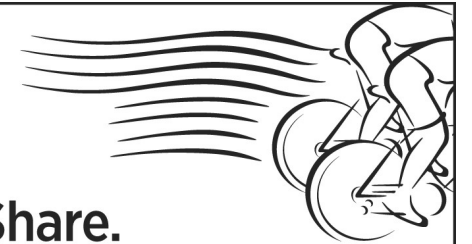
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Friday: 10 AM - 7 PM
Saturday: 10 AM - 6 PM
Sunday: 12 PM - 6 PM



Ride. Share.

That's what the Great Plains Bike Club is all about. We actively promote bicycling with rides for all levels of riders in and around Southeastern Nebraska.

Weekly rides with a leader | Show 'n go rides
Ice cream & coffee shop rides | Moon-lit rides
Hammering training rides | Trail rides

We sponsor the Spring Fling ride in April and Heatstroke 100 in August. We also promote bicycling safety through community-sponsored events. For more information and an on-line application to join the club, go to greatplainsbikeclub.org.



The Nebraska Bicycling Alliance is a nonprofit corporation primarily supported by public donations, memberships and grants. Our mission is to promote health and safety for all who ride bicycles in Nebraska.

The vision of the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance does not compete with existing clubs or organized bicycling groups, but rather enhances and supports all of these groups, bike shops, health and safety groups, city planners, policy makers and NDOR. We plan to promote bicycling in Nebraska when needed at the State and local levels in any way we can with project design, seeking federal funding, promoting safe routes for kids, and public education.

Learn more at: <http://www.nebike.org/>

TRAIL UPDATES!

N Street Protected Bikeway: The bikeway is under construction and has a late fall completion date. GPTN is still raising funds for this project.

Wilderness Park Bike Bridge: The Wilderness Park Bike Bridge between Pioneer Blvd. and Old Cheney has been completed and is now open.

Salt Creek Levee Trail Extension: This will be open in a few weeks between the Bob Devaney Sports Center and the old Charleston Street Bridge at Haymarket Park.

Billy Wolff Repair: A short stretch of the Billy Wolff Trail from where it emerges from the underpass at 27th and Capitol Parkway on the north side up to the new pedestrian bridge over the Antelope Creek will be replaced starting in late spring. The current ramp and trail will be removed and replaced with a 10 foot wide, concrete wide trail with a August 2015 completion. The detour will begin where the Billy Wolff and Rock Island Trail connect with riders needing to cross 27th and Capital Parkway at grade. Please use the sidewalk on the south side of Capital Parkway between 27th Street and Randolph.

Sheridan Street Penny Bridges project: This project will cause a lengthy closure of the Rock Island Trail between Calvert and South Streets beginning May 3 2015 and going through the end of September. The designated detour for this project will be along Calvert, east to 33rd, then north along 33rd to South St and west to the Rock Island Trail. Other options are available including going west to 31st St and then north along 31st to Van Dorn and east to the trail. Riders need to find a route that works best for them since the trail will be closed at Sheridan during the length of the project.

Jamaica North Trail: This project has been completed making a connection between Calvert Blvd. and 4th and "A" St. This connection adds 1.49 miles of trail to the network. Dedication party on May 8th.

Old Cheney Trail: Between 70th and 82nd is a Public Works Project that is expected to be completed in couple of weeks. Completion of this 1 mile section will extend the Old Cheney Trail from 70th St. to the Billy Wolff Trail at 84th St.

Pioneers Park Trail – Phase III is in the initial phase of design. This project will provide a connection along the southern edge of Pioneers Park with the western edge of the park. Expected completion is August 2016.



Celebrating the completion of the Wilderness Park Bridge between Pioneer Blvd and Old Cheney. The Run to Bridges event raised over \$8,500 this spring to support replacing the second bridge in Wilderness Park.

EVENT CALENDAR

MAY

1--National Bike Challenge Kickoff

5--NACHO Rides Start, Every Tuesday at 4 p.m. Novartis Trail Head at 84th St.

8--Bike to Work Week Kickoff—see article

8 – JAMAICA NORTH TRAIL DEDICATION, 5 p.m. 6th and Van Dorn—see article

14 – GPTN Tour de Lincoln Bike Ride—Southeast

15-Bike to Work Week Ice Cream Social

16 – Lincoln Industries Grand Fondo Bike Event; see lincolnindustriesgranfondo.com/

17-Oak Creek Valley Ride for Sertoma—see article

21 – GPTN Tour de Lincoln Bike Ride—Southwest

28 – Give to Lincoln Day

28 - Tour de Lincoln Bike Ride—Northwest

JUNE

6 –Tour de Lincoln Bike Ride—Northwest

28 – 13TH ANNUAL TRAIL TREK

SEPTEMBER

20 - Streets Alive—Peter Pan Park, Hartley, Clinton area

LINCOLN READY TO BE 1# AGAIN

Lincoln finished in 2nd place out of more than 800 communities in the third annual National Bike Challenge during 2014. Madison, Wisconsin edged out Lincoln to take top honors after Lincoln achieved 1st place in the 2013 Challenge. Nebraska also finished in second place in the Challenge among all 50 states., just behind Wisconsin. The National Bike Challenge is back for its 4th year, and Lincoln and the State of Nebraska is ready to regain top honors.

The Challenge begins on May 1st and runs through September 30, 2015. The National Bike Challenge registration can be found at <https://nationalbikechallenge.org/>. The challenge is free and open to anyone.

There are four apps you can download to automatically upload your rides on your smart phone – Endomondo, MapMyRide, Moves or Strava. Participants can also enter their mileage on-line each day at the website. The National Challenge will offer a chance for participants to win prizes in drawings each month, May through September.

A local Challenge, the Lincoln Bike Challenge, will run at the same time. Registration in the national challenge automatically enters local participants in the Lincoln Bike Challenge. The Lincoln Challenge will offer its own support, prizes, and a party in early October to celebrate the end of the Challenge.

The lead national sponsor is Scott Naturals® Brand and the Challenge is organized by the League of American Bicyclists. The Lincoln Challenge is presented courtesy of Cleaner Greener Lincoln, WasteCap Nebraska, BicycLincoln, the Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department, Lincoln Parks and Recreation and several bicycle shops in Lincoln.



BIKE To Work Week

The City of Lincoln is partnering with the local bicycling community to encourage residents to participate in Bike to Work Week, May 8-15. Participants who commit to riding to work at least one day that week can receive a free reusable bag full of information and coupons (while supplies last) and will be entered in a drawing for prizes. Registration sites are:

- Bike Rack, 3321 Pioneers Blvd.
- Cycle Works, 27th and Vine
- Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Dept, 3140 "N" St.
- Lincoln Parks and Recreation, 2740 "A" St.

A **free Kickoff Rally** is set for 8 a.m. Friday, May 8 at the Jayne Snyder Trails Center in Union Plaza. Bikers will meet at 7:30 a.m. at either the Bike Rack or Cycle Works locations listed above and bike as a group to Union Plaza for refreshments.

A **free Ice Cream Social** is set for 4:30 to 6 p.m. Friday May 15th at the Jayne Snyder Trail Center features refreshments from the UNL Dairy Store and prize drawings.

Bikers are strongly encouraged to wear helmets. The City also reminds residents that it is illegal to ride a bike on sidewalks in downtown and other congested districts.

For more information, visit lincoln.ne.gov or contact Mike Heyl, Public Health Educator, Lincoln Lancaster County Health Dept., at mhey1@lincoln.ne.gov or [402-441-3889](tel:402-441-3889).

COMPLETE STREETS REPORT

In Sept. 2013, Mayor Beutler signed a policy for the development of Complete Streets. The purpose for this policy was to encourage the design and operation of a transportation system that is safe and convenient for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. The City has just released the 2014 annual report on Complete Street efforts in Lincoln. Check out the report at: <http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/reports/CompleteStrts14.pdf>

MAKING CHANGE

by Roger Hirsch

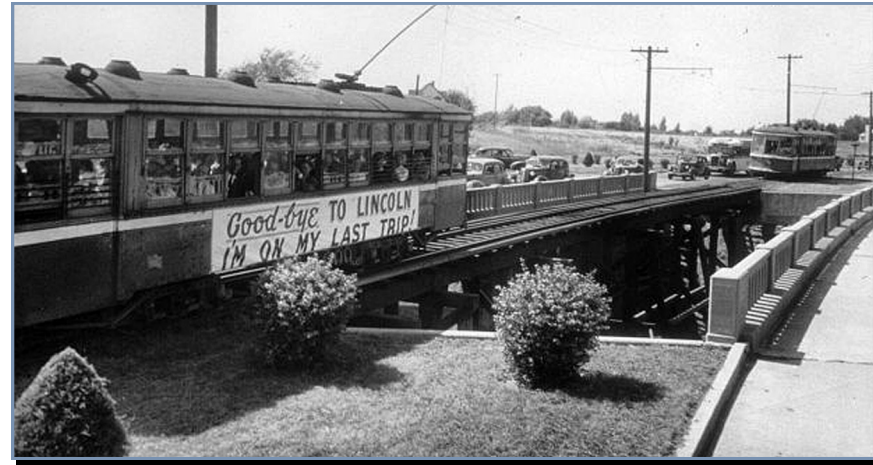
Pretty much everyone knows the story now—the story of Penny Bridge.

The little community of College View was established around 1890. According to Lincoln historian Jim McKee, College View sprang up around the newly developing Seventh-Day Adventist College. The new college was a “union” of all Seventh Day Adventist churches between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River, seeking room to expand. In 1906, the Bank of College View opened its doors, and the community really started to grow.

Operators of Lincoln's electric trolley system (horse-drawn trolleys ended in 1906) decided to extend service to College View, and it was necessary to build a bridge across the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad tracks on Sheridan Blvd. (There were three trolleys that served College View, and the Sheridan Blvd. route was the last built, and most popular.) The first bridge, completed in 1908, was a wooden trestle structure that was located less than 100 feet to the south of the more familiar second bridge.

When trolley riders from Lincoln arrived at the bridge, it was necessary to pay an additional penny to ride on to College View. Thus, very quickly, “Penny Bridge” was born. We'll call the wooden trestle Penny Bridge I. (Even when the fare jumped to a nickel years later, it was still “Penny Bridge”.)

A favorite Sunday outing was to take the trolley from downtown Lincoln all the way to College View. Visitors to College View could find a street vendor selling roasted peanuts, and “Peanut Hill” became a nickname—still used today—for the suburb. Dr. J.H. Kellogg of cornflakes fame was a frequent visitor to the community where he promoted the peanut as a non-meat protein source, and thus enhanced the community's nickname.



In 1929 College View ceased to exist as a separate community and became part of Lincoln's growing collection of suburbs. In 1934, the wood trestle bridge was replaced by the much stouter reinforced concrete structure with the familiar concrete railings (Penny Bridge II). It was *not* a WPA project contrary to some beliefs, and was 100% locally funded.

The 1934 replacement also meant a slight relocation of the bridge site, and that explains the odd, short service road that runs alongside the east-bound approach to Penny Bridge II. Today the segment allows access to homes at that location—and it still has the red paving bricks that used to characterize the length of the main boulevard. That was Sheridan Blvd. before construction of Penny Bridge II required the boulevard's turning radius to be slightly altered to properly line up with the second bridge.

Penny Bridge II and its much-admired concrete railings served trolley, motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic very well. Trolley-users continued to ride to Peanut Hill, paying the extra fare through September 1, 1945—the day before VJ Day—when WWII restrictions were lifted and the more-desirable buses could take urban people-moving all over the country. WWII restrictions on the use of rubber (and gasoline) meant that buses had to take a back seat to trolleys until the war ended. Worn tires could not be replaced, and the federal government told cities to keep the trolleys until the war was over. VJ day was September 2, 1945.



A view of Penny Bridge I from the tracks of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad--the future site of the Rock Island Trail.

There is no evidence of the trolley tracks remaining along the Sheridan Blvd. line across Penny Bridge, nor anywhere else in the city for that matter.

While the end of WWII doomed the College View trolley on the bridge, bankruptcy doomed the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad underneath it. Its last day of operation was May 31, 1984. The line had been serving Lincoln since 1892, when it had become the last major railroad to reach Lincoln. The end of the Rock Island Railroad also tolled the end of the traffic-squeezing trestles over Hwy. 2 east of 27th St. and over 27th St. just south of Hwy. 2. Both were knocked down by the city soon after it had obtained title, and were replaced by today's Rock Island Trail bridges.

The end of the railroad signaled the eventual birth of popular Rock Island Trail, itself the beneficiary of a city bond issue. A traffic-counter was installed on the trail in July, 2014 near Bishop Heights Park and it immediately began documenting nearly 1,000 cyclists and over 300 hikers, joggers and can-kickers *a day* on the Rock Island Trail.

And why do we belabor Penny Bridge?

If you bike and hike the Rock Island Trail, you know why. Penny Bridge II was falling down, falling down, falling down—and after 81 years of service, was kaput. For the past few years, a steel mesh cage has been catching falling bits of concrete that were peppering trail-users and leaving tire- and ankle-twisting obstacles on the trail. It will be replaced by a new structure and trail-users will have to leave the trail to get around the construction zone during the interim.

Hawkins Construction Co. got the bid, and has just begun the construction work that will give us Penny Bridge III.

Penny Bridge III will cost about \$2 million, and the site will be closed to all traffic for a few months. The Rock Island Trail will likely be closed 50 feet to the north and south of the existing structures. Officially the city designated a trail detour along 33rd St. from Calvert to South St. since there is a sidewalk available. Hikers and bikers familiar with the area are likely to find their own preferred detours—and hope there are no delays in constructing Penny Bridge III. The projected

life of the new bridge is 75 years.

Before Penny Bridge II fades from memory, let us remember that the trail beneath the 1934 structure was a popular spot on a popular trail. It was dank and cool in the heat of the summer as tall trees and thick undergrowth heavily shaded the trail. The area is fed by a spring, and never seemed to drain very well. On a hot summer day you could feel the temperature drop several degrees when you passed by those towering concrete pillars straining under the traffic-pounding taking place above. Traffic over Penny Bridge increased during the 1950's car craze and the opening of Lincoln Southeast High School in 1955.

Some may miss the pillars, even though they effectively concealed giggling juveniles who joyfully leaped out to scare cyclists hoping for more leisurely and safe passage beneath the bridge.

Rock Island Trail veterans have squinted through the undergrowth trying to spot the remnants of Penny Bridge I. Rotting 1908 timbers were still there as construction crews began work on the site. If you didn't get a picture of those remnants, well, you don't have a picture of those remnants. They will be gone.

Memories aside, the trail is likely to be very pleasant once the new bridge is in place. Architectural pictures indicate a return of the railing design that pleased so many, and new plantings and landscape design features will replace the thick undergrowth and muck.

When Penny Bridge III is finished, once again the Rock Island Trail underneath will bustle with dedicated bike-to-work executives, focused speedsters in their fashionable skin-tight togs, joggers in colorful clothes with neon shoestrings, dog-walkers wondering who is walking whom, roller-bladders silently skimming the surface, ear-budded hikers deaf to bikers' warnings, weekend trekkers trying to pronounce “Shimano”, kids popping “wheelies” at the most inopportune times, warbler-hunting birders and—oh, who knows what else.

And not one of them will have to pay an extra penny.



Concrete cages protecting pedestrians.



A rendering illustrating what the new bridge will look like when completed.