

THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Spring 1999

Vol. X No. 1

Connecting the Trails in Silver Spring

By Wayne Phyllaier
CCCT Board Member

The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) is proposed to continue into Silver Spring where it will connect to the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) and the Wayne Avenue Green Trail at a new Silver Spring Transit Center.

Action on completing the CCT into Silver Spring:

On Saturday, January 23, 1999 the CCCT sponsored a hike to support the preferred CCT alignment in Silver Spring. Approximately 60 trail supporters came out to explore the future trail from the Silver Spring Metro Station to where the Georgetown Branch Trail now ends at Stewart Avenue. After the return to the Silver Spring Metro Station some of the hikers continued on to explore the proposed MBT alignment from the Metro station south toward Takoma Park.

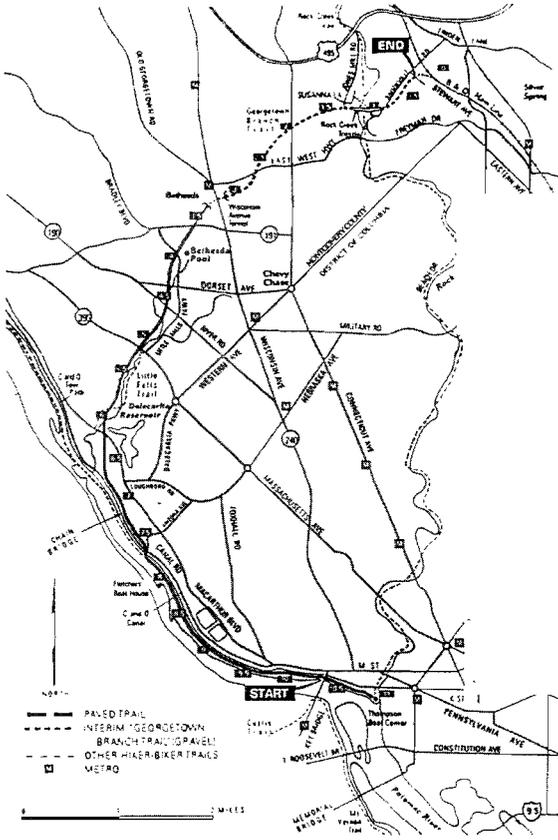
Continued on page 5



On January 23, CCCT members and friends went on a walking tour of the preferred alignment of the CCT into and through the proposed Silver Spring transit center. Leading the hikers up Second Avenue in Silver Spring are CCCT board members (l to r) Wayne Phyllaier, Henri Bartholomot and Doug Engle.

Check out the Coalition's NEW web site: <www.cctrail.org>

CRESCENT
COALITION FOR THE
CAPITAL
CRESCENT
TRAIL



January 15, 1999

Capital Crescent Trail
District of Columbia & Montgomery County, MD

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**Reach the Capital Crescent
by Internet**

For those of you who prefer to "surf the net" you can reach the Capital Crescent Trail through Ernie Brooks: **"evbrooks@oasys.dtnavy.mil"** He'll process your request.

The Crescent is published three times a board year (June-June) by the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT), P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD 20824, phone (202) 234-4874. CCCT is non-profit citizen's group promoting development of the 11.2 mile rail-to-rail conversion from Georgetown, D.C. to Silver Spring, MD for multi-purpose, recreational use.

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We request that all entries should be sent to the post office box listed above. Submissions should be sent on 3.5" diskette or via e-mail to **john_campanile@paramount.com**.



Printed by Serif Press Inc.

Letter To The Editor

My Lesson In Capital Crescent Trail Use

This description of an incident on the trail includes lessons for several types of trail users. It certainly added to the list of precautions I keep in mind as a regular user of the trail, usually on in-line skates and sometimes on a bicycle.

I was skating downgrade (generally southbound) in the vicinity of the Little Falls Parkway intersection with the trail when I noticed a family group approaching on foot. Suddenly, a child on a "sidewalk bike" appeared from behind the family group. She appeared to be looking up in the trees as she headed toward the edge of the path on the southbound side of the trail. In rapid order: she noticed either me or the trail's edge and turned to stay on the trail, still on the far edge and on a collision course with me. I swerved to go between her and her family group. She swerved again, back into my path; I headed right and avoided a collision - but not a fall.

As I was picking myself up her family was comforting her. She was quite upset. The family kindly asked about my well being while comforting her.

The incident caused me to give my practices in using the trail some critical thought. I concluded that I have to be prepared to avoid surprises such as the one I encountered. More

particularly I concluded that trail users need to be sure they know what kind of traffic they are facing. In cases where a cluster of walkers, bikers, or skaters can obscure a young trail user such as the one I encountered, we must be prepared for anything - including someone suddenly appearing directly in our path.

There is surely a lesson for parents here, as well. I would suggest that young trail users be kept in front of family groups so they can be seen by opposing traffic and by their parents.

Finally, I couldn't help but wonder what might have been the outcome if she had darted out in front of one of the bikers I occasionally see using the trail for training purposes. A collision might have been unavoidable and the result could have been serious injuries.

I view the trail as a treasure - an obvious source of joy to its many users. I take pleasure in seeing all kinds of users sharing the trail - the dog walkers, the joggers, the bird watchers, the elderly strollers and so on. Those of us whose use of the trail involves higher speeds and less ability to make sudden adjustments need to take particular care to anticipate the unexpected.

Don Regenhardt
Chevy Chase, Maryland



March 10, 1999

Coalition & Park Police To Host 3rd “Bells & Whistles”

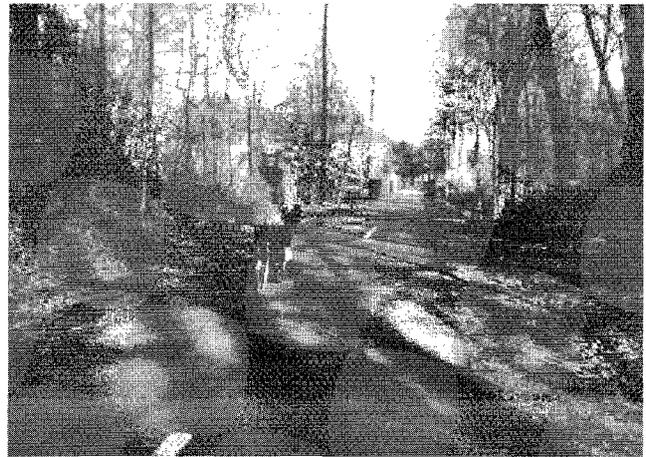
As if you didn't already have enough reasons to enjoy the Trail, now you can help make safety a priority. Plan to join members of the Coalition and the Park Police Volunteer Bicycle Patrol for our third “Bells & Whistles” event on Saturday, May 1, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Bethesda Avenue

trailhead (Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues, across from Barnes & Noble). We'll give away bells to bicyclists and whistles to rollerbladers as part of our continuing campaign to remind trail users to give an audible warning when passing slower moving users.

Put Some ‘Sole’ In Your Life

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a new target - cars - in its drive to promote healthy lifestyles. The Atlanta-based agency launched a major media campaign promoting community planning and road design that make it easier to get around on foot or bicycle instead of depending on cars for transportation. Such planning and community involvement for transportation alternatives is what helped get the rails-to-trails Capital Crescent Trail going in the mid-80's.

CDC scientist Rich Killingsworth acknowledges that transforming the country's infrastructure could take decades, but “even a small shift of inactive people starting to use trails will have a huge impact on the nation's health. And we'll see people begin to make the connection between transportation and health.”



Now doesn't that just make you want to dust off the old Schwinn or sneakers and use the Capital Crescent Trail on your next errand to pick up a quart of milk or rent a video?

Tunnel Within A Tunnel

Beginning early March for about six week period, a plywood tunnel will protect Trail users starting at the gate at the end of the Wisconsin Avenue tunnel to the end of the overhang and beginning of the open trail. The Elm Street Park access will also be protected via a T-junction with the trail. This tunnel will protect users while restoration work is completed on the crumbling concrete floor of the Air Rights parking garage directly above. Depending on the weather, the project should take about six weeks to complete. Flagmen will be used when work is actually in progress, but Trail disruption should be minimal.

The contractor has spoken in terms of eventually improving the lighting in the overhang where the Elm Street junction occurs and of installing a water fountain. Plans to build along the Trail beyond the overhang have been abandoned although the contractor plans to fix the crumbling retaining wall next to the Trail at Pearl Street. However a substantial high-rise apartment development will be built on top of the existing overhang, set back from the edge of the overhang five feet for one story and further back for the additional stories. This new development will not affect the Trail.

Connecting the Trails in Silver Spring

Continued from page 1

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has begun a trail alignment study for the CCT and MBT trails through Silver Spring. The study area is the 7000 ft. section through Silver Spring from Talbot Avenue in North Silver Spring to King Street near the D.C. line. The CCCT is continuing to express its support of a direct, off-road trail alignment alongside the CSX railway through meetings with M-NCPPC staff and in letters and testimony at public hearings to the planning board. The trail implementation study should be complete by this fall. M-NCPPC expects that construction of an interim CCT into Silver Spring can begin in 2001.

Action on connecting the trails in Silver Spring:

Montgomery County DPW&T has been developing designs for a new Silver Spring Transit Center. The first concept proposed trail connections

for the CCT, MBT and Wayne Avenue Greenway at the transit center that are indirect and would cross several busy highways at grade. The CCCT, with WABA and the MBT Coalition, wrote county officials expressing our concerns that such a poor connection would seriously harm all three trails.

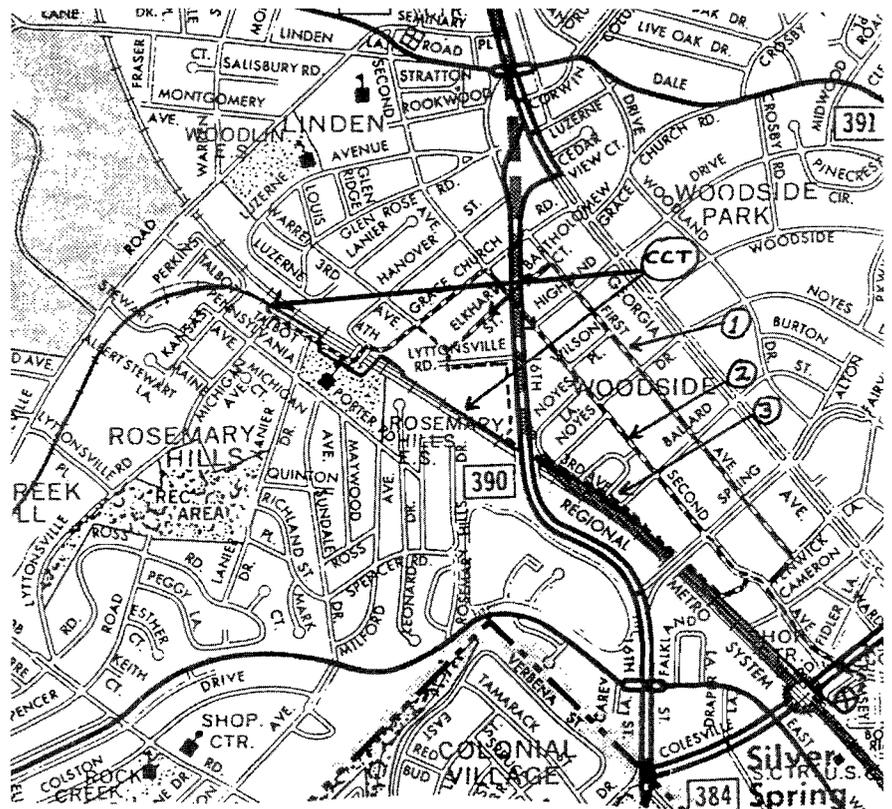
On February 23 the Montgomery County DPW&T held a community workshop to present design options for the transit center, in part to address the concerns we had expressed. At the workshop several different concepts were presented for connecting the trails at the transit center. These included two much improved concepts for connecting the CCT and MBT with a trail going directly through the transit center, as well as a concept with an indirect connection alongside local streets. Selection of the final

Continued on page 6

Options for a New Interim Trail

LEGEND:

- CCT — Future Capital Crescent Trail
- 1 ----- First Avenue
- 2 ----- Second Avenue
- 3 ----- Third Avenue



Connecting the Trails in Silver Spring

Continued from page 5

design will be taking place within a few months. DPW&T expects there will be at least one more public meeting where we can comment on their design options before the final design selection is made. DPW&T are to be commended for their recent efforts to develop designs with a good trail connection, and we need to continue to let them know how important this trail connection is. The project manager, Kassa Seyoum, DPWT Facilities and Services, (301) 217-6114 can be contacted for more information on the project status.

How can I help?

Over the next several months important trail alignment and transit center design decisions will be made. This is a good time to write your public officials asking them to support the trail. The CCT will not connect through Silver Spring as a first class trail network until:

- The new Silver Spring Transit Center includes a good through-trail connection.
- The CCT is built through North Silver Spring on the preferred alignment alongside the CSX railway, including grade separated crossings of 16th Street and Colesville Road.
- The MBT is built through South Silver Spring on the preferred alignment alongside

the Metro railway, including a gradeseparated crossing of Georgia Avenue.

Planners and elected officials need to know that both the trail users and the residents of Silver Spring want the trails to be direct, level, and off-road. The preferred alignment and a good connection through the transit center are needed to achieve this.

To support a good connection for trails at the new Silver Spring Transit Center write:

Mr. Robert Merryman
Acting Director
Montgomery County DPWT
101 Monroe Street
Rockville MD 20850

To support a direct alignment for the trails through North and South Silver Spring write:

Mr. Bill Hussmann
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring MD 20910

Continued on page 7



Hikers walk along Third Avenue towards Sixteenth Street (CSX tracks are in the background)...



...and later cross over the Talbot Street bridge, directly above the CSX tracks and the northernmost point of the abandoned Georgetown Branch rail line, AKA the Capital Crescent Trail.

The Silver Spring Connection:

Whats in the Works?

- Three trails, the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT), the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT), and the Wayne Avenue Green Trail are proposed to create a trail network that is linked together in Silver Spring.
- A Silver Spring Transit Center design that includes connections for these trails is being developed by Montgomery County DPW&T. One concept under consideration proposes trail connections that are indirect and hilly. The trail would cross several busy highways at grade. Other concepts propose a good, direct trail connection through the center.
- Trail alignments are now under way at M-NCPPC for the sections of the CCT and MBT through Silver Spring. Some alignments being considered would put the trail on indirect routes along streets in North and South Silver Spring. These alignments will not preserve the direct, off-road character of the trails needed for their success.

What must be Done?

The trails will not connect as first class trails in Silver Spring until:

- The new Silver Spring Transit Center includes a good through-trail connection.



While a southbound Metrorail train passes, hikers are led through the heavy underbrush beneath the Spring Street bridge in Silver Spring, following another portion of the preferred alignment of the CCT.

- The CCT is built through North Silver Spring on the preferred alignment alongside the CSX railway, including crossing Colesville Road on a bridge.
- The MBT is built through South Silver Spring on the preferred alignment alongside the Metro railway, including crossing Georgia Avenue on a bridge.

Planners and elected officials need to know that both the trail users and the residents of Silver Spring want the trails to be direct, level, and off-road. The preferred alignment and a good connection through the transit center is needed to achieve this.

How can I Help?

- Write your public officials asking them to support the trail. Call or e-mail Wayne Phyllaier, CCCT board member, (301) 565-3157, cphyilla@erols.com, for names and addresses of public officials. Names and addresses, including e-mail addresses, may also be obtained from these web sites:
 - County Executive:
<http://www.co.mo.md.us>
 - County Council:
<http://www.co.mo.md.us/council>
 - County Department of Public Works and Transportation:
<http://www.dpwt.com>
 - Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission:
<http://www.mncppc.org>
- Ask your local civic association and community groups to go on record to support the trail.
- Join the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail and help us spearhead efforts to complete the trail along the preferred alignment through Silver Spring, to open the trestle over Rock Creek, and to make the whole CCT more attractive and fun to use. Join Coalition activities - at events, as a volunteer, at board meetings. Call (202) 234-4874 for more information.

CCT Members and Friends Making A Difference

Roland I. Perusse has arranged with the U.S. Park Service for the repair of a very short but dangerous segment of the Capital Crescent Trail at a bridge near the Georgetown end of the Trail, for the purpose of making it safer for trail users. Mr. Perusse is a resident of the Foggy Bottom area of Northwest Washington and is a regular user of the Trail.



*Sign on pole reads:
"The next mile of
trail is proudly
cleaned of litter with
the assistance of the
Taylor Boys."*

During the weekend of March 6 -7, members of the Chevy Chase Lake Beautification Committee did extensive work to clean underbrush and fallen branches from the Connecticut Avenue access to the Capital Crescent Trail. After years of neglect and January's ice storms, this Chevy Chase group thought it was time for action. Leading the effort were Chevy Chase residents Chris, Caroline, Claire and Peter Kelly, along with fellow residents Chris, Alexi and Catherine Poch. John Thompson and his staff from the Montgomery County Highway Department followed up by removing all of the debris collected by the volunteers.

The same volunteers returned to this area of the Trail the weekend of March 20 - 21 to sow wildflower seeds which should produce bluish tinted wildflowers from about early May through August. The same good folks who did the clean-up donated the seeds. In addition, the County Highway Department has agreed to landscape this area with low maintenance shrubbery sometime this spring.

Dial Up Trail Conditions And Events

Be the Coalition's eyes and ears the next time you're out on the Trail - Call the CCCT Information Line at 202-234-4874 and press "8" when prompted. Leave a message on trail conditions that you've encountered, or on any issue which might impact the Trail. The hotline message provides trail users with weekly updates on trail conditions and Coalition events.

If you're new to the Capital Crescent Trail, leave your name and address to receive a membership brochure. After reading it, we hope you'll support the CCT and become a member of the Coalition.

CCCT INFORMATION LINE, 202-234-4874

Use your touch-tone phone to access one of our mailboxes:

- 1: Background of the CCT
 - 2: Coalition meeting dates
 - 3: Membership information
 - 4: Obtain a CCT map
 - 5: Volunteer activities
 - 6: Other messages
 - 7: [Inactive]
 - 8: Trail hotline & events
-

Big Macs On The Trail

Last January, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved plans by the McDonald's Corporation to convert the River Road Roy Rogers fast food restaurant, which is located adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail, to a McDonald's. These changes include the restaurant chain's plans to cater to users of the Trail by offering a bicycle rack and water fountains inside the restaurant.

A special exception was granted in March 1998 allowing the conversion, but preliminary

plans had to be approved by the Planning Board before the project could move forward. The approval includes a provision for an easement for expansion of River Road and the Capital Crescent Trail. This would accommodate the restaurant's plans to provide a drive-through while reducing the indoor seating capacity of the renovated McDonald's.

As of this writing, a timetable for renovations has not been announced.

Use a Helmet - The Head You Save May Be Your Own

Use your bike or in-line skates without wearing a helmet and take your life in your hands. Statistics give you the stark reality: 96 percent of bicyclists killed in 1996 were not wearing helmets - and most of those deaths were caused by head injuries.

At least 15 states, including Maryland, have laws requiring children and young adults to wear helmets when bike riding. But helmets are not just kids' stuff. If you aren't convinced, surf over to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute's web site (www.bhsi.org); it's loaded with facts about the hazards of going helmetless.

The National Safe Kids Campaign (800-662-0600) and Bell Bike Helmets (www.bellbikehelmets.com) have teamed up on a nationwide public safety campaign, complete with on-the-road representatives who promote the use of helmets and dispense them at low cost to children and their families. This effort is supported by the Center for Injury Prevention (www.bucklebear.com), who provide certified children's helmets for less than \$10.

Correct size and a snug fit are important to prevent the helmet from coming off in an accident. Bike shops and rental facilities can help you find a good-fitting helmet.



Accidents Involving Bicyclists

Every year in the United States:

- More than 900 bicyclists are killed.
- 20,000 bicyclists are admitted to hospitals.
- 580,000 receive emergency room treatment.
- 4 out of 10 bicyclists admitted to hospital have head injuries.
- 70 to 80 percent of bicyclist fatalities involve head injuries.

Source: Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute

ALONG THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL..

5 Years Ago...

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission gives high priority to funding River Road bridge with ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) grants. [Editor's note: ISTEA funds destined for Trail's development will total \$1.317 million by the end of

1995.] Along the D.C. side of the Trail, a contractor hired by the Federal Highway Administration begins work on the Arizona Avenue trestle by removing wood decking and blocking passage, beginning a two-year closure of the trestle.

10 Years Ago...

CCCT and Congresswoman Connie Morella (Md. District 8) join the National Park Service in seeking \$6.6 million congressional appropriation to acquire four miles of Trail right-of-way in the District. On the Maryland end, a memo from Montgomery County Parks Department indi-

cates concerns with allowing interim trail use anywhere in the Trail's right-of-way due to cost, liability and other concerns. Preliminary cost estimates to develop the Trail are put at \$2 million per mile with access prohibited under Wisconsin Avenue.

32 Years Ago...

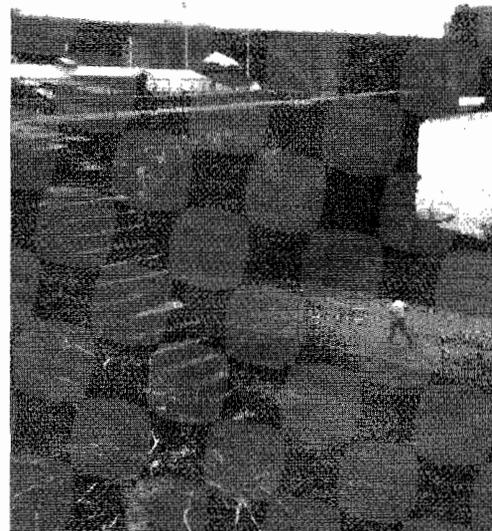
A major fire, later found to be a case of arson, burns portions of the Rock Creek Trestle. It remains structurally sound since the flames fed chiefly on the surface creosote, a wood preserva-

tive. Five years later, Hurricane Angles would deal the trestle its second major blow when the rain-swollen Rock Creek knocks out part of the support structure with fallen trees and debris in its wake.

110 Years Ago...

A Georgetown section of rail line, approximately one mile of tracks is constructed along Water Street (now K Street) from Rock Creek to just west of the aqueduct bridge, but not connected to the rest of the Georgetown Spur.

The aqueduct bridge was constructed in 1843 for the Alexandria Canal (connecting seaport Alexandria to the C&O Canal) crossing the Potomac River on an 1100-foot bridge. What remains of the aqueduct today is shown in photo. (Key Bridge is in the background)



Yes! I Want To Help Complete The Capital Crescent Trail!

Name(s) _____ (H) _____ (W) _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-mail _____

\$100 SPECIAL HONOR MEMBERSHIP

Your name on our annual report, action alerts and subscription to our newsletter.
IF DESIRED, Rail spike: ___yes, OR T-shirt, size: M L XL

\$60 SPONSORING MEMBERSHIP

Newsletter subscription, action alerts.
IF DESIRED, T-shirt, size: M L XL

\$30 SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

Newsletter subscription, action alerts.

\$10 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Newsletter subscription, action alerts.

___New member ___Renewing Member

Thanks for your efforts on behalf of the Trail! Here's an additional contribution of \$_____.

Make checks payable to: The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD. 20824
Detailed four-color map of the Capital Crescent Trail with historical perspectives is free to new members.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All events are rain or shine, unless noted. To confirm any event, call the CCCT User & Events Hotline, 202-234-4874, box 8; or our NEW web site: <www.cctrail.org>

CCCT MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS, Mondays, April 19 and May 17, 7:00 p.m. in Bethesda Regional Library, Arlington Rd. Closest Metrorail: Bethesda. Bike parking indoors. Guests are welcome! ♿

Thursday, April 22, 7:00 a.m., EARTH DAY BIKE-IN ON THE CCT. Ride to Earth Day event in downtown D.C. sponsored by WABA. Meet at Bethesda Avenue Trailhead. Contact WABA, 202-628-2500, or CCCT User & Events Hotline.

Sunday, April 25, Noon - 5 p.m., BIKE MONTGOMERY RALLY at Woodley Gardens Park, Rockville. Bike rodeo, safety events for children, 3-mile ride on Rockville's newest city trail, giveaways, and more. 301-315-5796. Raindate: May 2.

Saturday, May 1, 9:00 a.m., "BELLS & WHISTLES" SAFETY EVENT at Bethesda Avenue Trailhead. See p. 4. ♿

May, date to be determined 1ST ANNUAL CCCT ARTS FESTIVAL. Watch for announcement! ♿

Saturday, June 5, NATIONAL TRAILS DAY CELEBRATION. Contact American Hiking Society, 301-565-6704, or CCCT User & Events Hotline.

Monday, June 14, 6:00 p.m., CCCT ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING, ♿ Elm St. Park, downtown Bethesda (adjacent to east end of Wisconsin Avenue tunnel). Closest Metrorail: Bethesda. Playground available. Food & refreshments served. [NEWSLETTER DEADLINE; Mail to P.O. Box 30703, Bethesda, MD. 20824, or <john_campanile@paramount.com>]

Saturday, June 19, "TOUR DE CROSSANT" on the Capital Crescent Trail. Benefit hosted by La Madeline Bakery for the Alzheimer's Association Greater Washington Chapter. For info, call 301-652-8392.

Saturday/Sunday, July 31/Aug 1, 10K CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL HIKE, Sponsored by Northern Virginia Volksmarchers. Location: Silver Spring. 703-820-3535.

***The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
Board Members 1998/99***

*Clockwise from bottom left: John Campanile,
Ernie Brooks, Henri Bartholomot, David Putman,
Phil Lerman, Wayne Phyllaier, John Dugger,
David Sproul, and Victoria Cordova.
Center: Doug Engle and Scott Hall.
Not pictured: Pat Baptiste, Charlie Wellander*

Photo by Ellen Jones.



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