

New Lebanon & Nassau News

NASSAU

The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail: Connecting “New York’s extraordinary experiences, people, and places”

by Denise Wright

With spring quickly approaching and people getting severe cases of cabin fever, many people are starting to look for outside entertainment and exercise. The Albany-Hudson Electric Trail is beginning to get busy, but people must remember certain etiquette to make everyone’s experience enjoyable and safe.

The AHE trail is a 36-mile dawn-dusk-only bicycling and hiking route that begins near the Amtrak station in Rensselaer and goes to the Town of Greenport in Columbia County. The trail is approximately 12 feet wide with “gentle grades, welcoming visitors of all ages and abilities. Most of the trail has a paved asphalt surface, but some Columbia County sections have a stone dust surface.” It is an intricate part of the Empire State Trail system, a 750-mile trail from New York City to Canada and Albany to Buffalo. Governor Andrew Cuomo launched this project in 2017 to “promote outdoor recreation, encourage healthy lifestyles, support community vitality, and bolster tourism-related economic development.”

Parking does seem to be an issue for some wanting to use the trail. Individuals are asked not to park on private property and be mindful about impacting traffic. An online map “showing the exact trail route, trail surface, and designated parking areas are available at <https://empiretrail.ny.gov>.”

According to Andy Beers, Director of the Empire Trail, some of the general tips people need to be aware of begin with being alert. Wearing items like headphones that prevent people from hearing what’s happening around them could be dangerous. Likewise, at trail/road crossings, it is vital to make sure walkers and bicyclists “make eye contact with drivers and other trail users before proceeding.” No motorized vehicles of any type are allowed on the trail because they could endanger bicyclists, walkers, and pets. Bicyclists need to remember to go slow when the path is busy, alert people when passing them, and wear a helmet under 14 years of age.

Individuals that are bringing pets on the trail need to be aware that “all dogs and pets must be kept on a leash, not exceeding six feet in length, at all times.” Owners must keep their dogs under control and dispose



Photo by Denise Wright

of the pet’s waste in “a prompt and sanitary manner.” Any damage or personal injury caused by the pet is the responsibility of the owner. The use of horses on the trail is prohibited.

Respect is a necessity for all trail users’ safety and enjoyment. People should avoid throwing items like rocks on the trail because it could hurt pets’ paws and endanger bicyclists by causing flat tires and injure walkers’ ankles. Trail users need to avoid entering private property along the trail without “explicit permission” of the owner. No disorderly conduct and obscene language are tolerated because young children accompany parents and grandparents. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the trail.

“According to the New York State Regulations governing the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail’s public use (Dec. 30, 2019), state and local law enforcement departments are authorized to enforce the trail regulations,” which “may result in fines of up to \$250 plus a mandatory surcharge.”

EAST NASSAU

A Tale Of Crops And Critters

Submitted by June Varner



June Varner’s Snowdrops, apparently very palatable to Bambi. Photo by June Varner.

Here is a spring green picture. These Snowdrops were blooming through the snow by March 7 this year. I have my yard and garden fenced to keep the critters out. Last week I spotted a deer eating my raspberry plants and wondered how/why she got through the fence. I found she had lifted the fence up to slip underneath to reach the blossoms from the Snowdrops and then moved on to the raspberries. She left the yard by throwing herself against the fence enough to lift it off the ground. The flowers have recovered nicely and I have further anchored down the fence.

NASSAU

Tailgate And Plant Sale

The 10th annual Town of Nassau Tailgate Sale will be held on April 24, from 8 am until noon at the Highway Department, 599 Central Nassau Road, County Road 16 in East Nassau. Vendors are encouraged to contact the Farm Committee at farms@townofnassau.org or 518-766-3559 ext 2 option 1 to reserve a spot, which is free. Note: Masks are required and social distancing.

Vendors of small livestock such as chickens, ducks, rabbits, piglets, goats and sheep should bring crates for sale or a suitable carrier for buyers of their livestock. Vendors with garden or yard plants, seedlings, inspected packaged local meats, jams and jellies, honey and maple syrup are encouraged to attend. Vendors, please comply with applicable rules and regulations.

Admission to this event is free and it will be held rain or shine.

EAST NASSAU

A New Bakery In The Near Future

by Denise Wright

The April 5 East Nassau Board of Trustees meeting reviewed a special use permit application for a wholesale bakery called the Bees Knees Bakery at the former Hoags Corners Hotel on NYS Route 66. Ultimately, bakery owner Julie Ritchie hopes that once Health Department permits are secured, there will be a retail café for breakfast and lunch with 25 parking spaces.

Ritchie will be leasing the property from Mitch Levinn of Hoags Corners Properties, LLC. The Hoags Corners Hotel was built in approximately 1830 and, according to Levinn, had deteriorated “over the past two decades,” and he is happy that the property will “be useful for the community.” Town Historian and Board of Trustee member Tom Kernan confirmed with the owner that many of the property’s historical elements would be kept intact. A public hearing to review this permit will be on May 4 at 6:45 pm at the Hoags Corner Ambulance building.

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Smiles Ice Cream Celebrates 10 Years

by Denise Wright

Who doesn’t like ice cream? People in Nassau love it and know just the place to visit for such a delight: Smiles Ice Cream on John Street right near the baseball field and Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School.

In 2011, long-time Nassau residents Melissa and Frank Bulan decided to run a fun part-time business with their daughters Kayla and Alexis. For Melissa and Frank to add something with the potential to add to the Nassau community has been quite fulfilling. According to Melissa, “One of the saddest things is seeing empty spaces in our community and wishing they all had something fun and exciting to fill them.”

Originally Smiles began in the old Nassau Vet building on U.S. Route 20 but moved several times in five years before finding the “perfect spot” on John Street to “rejuvenate and call our own.” This centrally located spot is next to the Albany Hudson Electric bike trail and has become a popular stop along the route. This year, the Bulans will be adding a bike rack and several items suggested by guests, including Only 8 frozen



Melissa and Frank Bulan with their daughters Alexis and Kayla. Photo by Denise Wright.

yogurt and Almond Swirl, a dairy-free and vegan friendly alternative.

While COVID presented some challenges, Smiles was able to persevere by setting up a safe drive-thru. The Bulans are happy to be part of the Nassau community, and they love supporting local businesses and baseball leagues. Smiles is looking forward to beginning its 10th year of operation, which began on April 3, and hopes everyone will have a happy and healthy 2021.