

## *New board*

The October board meeting of North Carolina Rail-Trails resulted in several changes effective in January. The changes include Chair Carolyn Townsend stepping down after 18 years to be replaced by John Morck.

Two new additions to the board will serve through 2011. They are:

Bob Menzies, president of Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway Co. The company, which is located in Star, has routes from Gulf to Charlotte and Star to Aberdeen.

Sam Erwin, a Burke County resident who has worked at Western Piedmont Council of Governments for 21 years as environmental coordinator. In that job he has been involved with several trail projects including the Morganton Greenway and the connector trail from Wilson's Creek Visitor Center to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

He was a founding member of Caldwell County Pathways and has served as an officer with Trout Unlimited, Friends of Wilson Creek and

**Board** (Continued on page 3)

## Carolyn Townsend steps down after 18 years as NCRT chair

Carolyn R. "CR" Townsend steps down as chair of North Carolina Rail-Trails in January after an 18-year tenure in which out-of-pocket, volunteer NCRT became a state-wide advocate for rail-trails and evolved into a statewide 501c(3) non-profit with federal railbanking land trust capacity.

"This has been an incredible experience to help move NCRT from the aspirations expressed around a kitchen table to a non-profit organization that is a persistent and consistent voice in state rail-trail decisions," said the retired public health nurse, who was a founder of NCRT.

"We moved from eight original members to a membership roll of 325 today, a mailing list of 800 for 'Little Toot' and local contacts in 30 counties where rail-trail efforts are in various planning stages.

"I feel that the most important accomplishment during my tenure was establishing NCRT's non-profit status



File photo

Carolyn Townsend chaired NCRT board from 1990 through 2008.

and corporate structure. Working with NCRT has been fun and worthwhile and could not have been done without the support, ideas and love of my husband, AL Capehart."

**Townsend** (Continued on page 2)

## 130 miles of sun, sweat and glorious views



Photo by Merlin Perry

NCRT board member Merlin Perry and his wife Judy biked from Keesport, Penn., to Cumberland, Md., on the Great Allegheny Passage.

Retiring NCRT board member Merlin Perry and his wife, Judy, took a three-day, 130-mile bike trip from McKeesport, Penn., to Cumberland, Md., in October on the Great Allegheny Passage that featured an array of fall colors and grand vistas along with lodgings and restaurants from another era.

Merlin and Judy were part of a group of 14 riders, most of whom were from Colorado and pedaled all the way to Washington, D.C. Three vehicles (one large truck and two cars) accompanied the entourage, which meant 11 people pedaled every day.

**Bike trip** (Continued on page 4)

<http://www.ncrailtrails.org>  
under construction

## Townsend

(Continued from page 1)

John Morck, a board member since 1994, was elected chair at NCRT's October board meeting and assumes his duties in January. The Apex resident is a land use planner with the state Department of Commerce.

Capehart, a NCRT founder and current president of the board, said: "CR has been critical in the whole process of moving us forward to make the organization viable in the non-profit world.

"Administratively CR has worked over the years with board members and volunteers developing our financial management system and securing small grants for organizational development.

He said Townsend's other contributions include coordinating communications with NCRT members and friends, developing agendas, presiding over meetings of the board and pinch hitting as secretary to the board.

He recalled the early publications of "Little Toot" when the mailings were not organized. "CR spent an entire evening with these address labels walking around the room lining them up according to the Zip Code."

"In her years as chair of NCRT, she has been very diligent and efficient in her duties," said Mike Domonkos, a board member since 1997. "She has been particularly effective in maintaining NCRT's good relationships with affiliated and similarly focused state-wide and local organizations. She has been extraordinarily responsive in communications to and from the directors."

Townsend helped found NCRT in 1988. With the creation of a corporate board in 1990 she became chair. During her tenure, NCRT built its' organizational infrastructure and became a fixture in state

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participates in workplace campaigns with



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discussions about rail-trails. One of NCRT's major accomplishments during Townsend's tenure was achieving 501(c)3 non-profit status, which made NCRT eligible for partnerships with and funding from various sources, including:

The environmental workplace giving federation Earth Share of North Carolina (previously known as the Environmental Federation of North Carolina); the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation; the state Department of Commerce's Travel and Tourism Division of Rural Tourism; and the Conservation Trust of North Carolina.

Townsend also coordinated board participation in the three-year business plan currently



Photo by Nancy Pierce  
NCRT President AL Capehart presents Golden Spike Award to Eagle Scout Ted LeGrand of Shelby Troop 100 with family members looking on.

being completed for adoption by the NCRT board.

Townsend came from California to North Carolina in the early 1960s and worked for the Durham anti-poverty agency Operation Break-through before signing on with the state public health district that served Caswell, Chatham, Orange, Person and Lee counties.

She spent the last 15 years of her 40-year public health career with the state Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health. Upon her retirement, Gov. Mike Easley awarded her the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, one of the state's highest accolades for meritorious service.

Townsend, an active grandmother, lives in Pittsboro with her husband AL Capehart.

## Briefs

Dan Arrasmith has resigned from the NCRT Board of Directors and closed the Web site: [www.ncrail-trails.org](http://www.ncrail-trails.org). Currently under construction is a new Web site: [www.ncrailtrails.org](http://www.ncrailtrails.org)

**Jacksonville's Rails to Trails Greenway** formally opened in June with a ribbon cutting for the 5.2 mile trail. [www.jdnews.com/news/trail\\_57533\\_article.html/city\\_base.html](http://www.jdnews.com/news/trail_57533_article.html/city_base.html)

A recent survey by AARP magazine ranks **Jacksonville** third nationally as the greenest city in the nation with 11.4 percent of the population either biking or walking when they commute.

**Earth Share of North Carolina's** 2008 fund raising goals included a 10 percent increase in pledges for environmental causes. That is good news for North Carolina Rail-Trails which receives half of its budget from workplace giving programs under the Earth Share of North Carolina umbrella.

**North Carolina Rail-Trails** has fine-tuned its vision and mission statements which now read:

**Vision:** NCRT envisions a state-wide trail network which provides active transportation and healthy recreational options; stimulates tourism and economic development; provides public access to historic places and open space; connects communities and destinations.

**Mission:** NCRT works to protect rail corridors for trail or rail-with-trail use.



### Resource Contacts

NC State Trails Program

NC DOT Rail Planner

NC DOT Bike-Ped. Div.

NPS Field Office, RTCA

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Darrell McBane

Pam Davis

Tom Norman

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Kelly Pack

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919-733-7245 x-274

919-715-2342

828-271-4779 x-272

202-974-5148

## Board

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the Foothills Land Conservancy of North Carolina.

Jack Kiser, director of planning for Gastonia for the last 16 years, will serve through 2009 to compete Shellie Pfohl's term. During a 35-year career Kiser's accomplishments include many firsts: a greenways plan; a parks, recreation and open space plan; construction of the 2.5-mile Avon-Catawba Creek Greenway Trail; and construction of Gastonia's first rail-trail, the Highland Rail-Trail.

He has been active in various state organizations. Kiser received a bachelor's in political science from Western Carolina and a master's in public administration from N.C. State.

Three current board members were re-elected to three-year terms. They are Harry Clapp, Dave Connelly and Bob Segal.

Officers elected to two-year terms are Connelly, vice-chair, and Segal, treasurer. President AL Capehart will continue in that office for one year until his term ends in 2009. Current secretary Charles Farley will be considered for re-election at the Jan. 10 board meeting.

## Golden Spike awarded

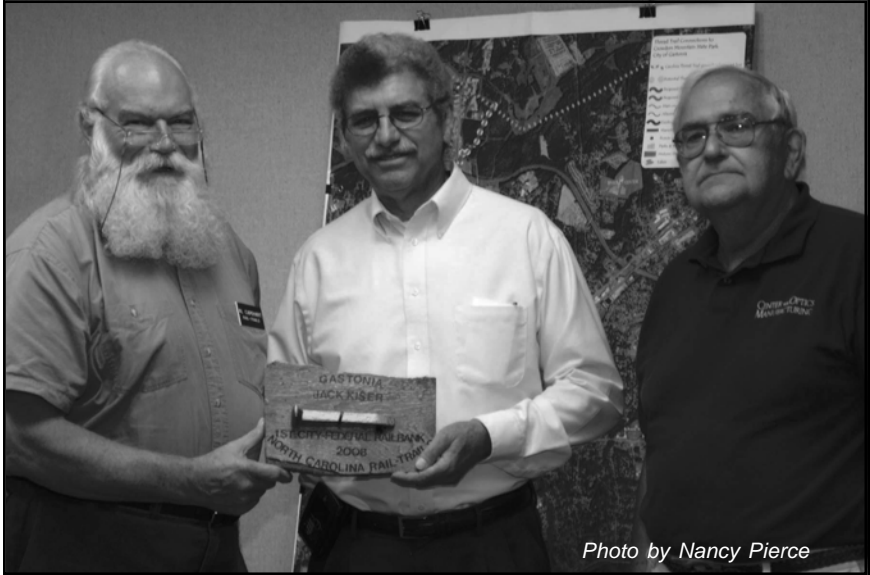


Photo by Nancy Pierce

NCRT President, AL Capehart (left), awards Golden Spike to Jack Kiser, Gastonia planning director, for obtaining federal railbank for Gastonia's Highland Rail-Trail. Former board member Dan Arrasmith (right) provided pro bona expertise for the project.

## Suggested holiday reads

NCRT board member Harry Clapp writes:

"I just received (as a b'day present) an excellent book that would be a good one to refer to. It's 'Landmarks on the Iron Road' by William D. Middleton, 'dean of rail authors,' published by Indiana University Press. It's a beautifully-illustrated 'table-top' type book that would be a superb addition to any library or collection.

"It covers the 'spiral tunnels' on the Canadian Pacific through the Selkirk Mountains that I traveled some years ago. If you want to take a good train trip, take the Rocky Mountaineer from Calgary/Banff Springs to Vancouver that goes through

these tunnels. This book doesn't have much coverage on rail-trails."

Interested in some rail-trail related reading? Several NCRT board members recommend "Train Time: Railroads and the Imminent Reshaping of the United States Landscape" by John R. Stilgoe, University of Virginia Press (2007), ISBN 0813926688.

According to a Web site, Stilgoe carries "his ideas about the spatial consequences of railways up to the present moment. Arguing that the train is returning, the author posits a future for railways as powerful shapers of American life."

Share with "Little Toot" your suggestions for good reads about railroads and rail-trails.

## Santa train

New Hope Valley Railway is offering its usual Santa Train rides on four weekend days prior to Christmas with a live Santa Claus on board. On Dec. 6, 7, 13 and 14 five rides are available daily from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with either diesel or steam locomotives.

The trip from Bonsal to New Hill and back takes about one hour. Arrive at least 35 minutes early. Regular tickets are \$9 for adults and \$6 for children ages 2 to 12. Tickets can be purchased on line. For more information see Web site: <http://nhvry.org/schedule.htm>

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Reason for interest in rail-trails \_\_\_\_\_

**NCRT annual memberships: Individual - \$25, Corporate - \$100**  
**Mail to North Carolina Rail-Trails, PO Box 61348, Durham, NC 27715-1348**

NCRT is a 501-c(3) public non-profit tax exempt organization founded in 1990.  
 All contributions and donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

**"To Protect Rail Corridors for Trail or Rail with Trail Use"**

## Bike trip

(Continued from page 1)

Here are a few highlights from Merlin's notes.

Oct. 12: Started riding about 9:30 a.m. out of McKeesport, a devastated old industrial area. Made 42 miles. Over-nighted in Connellsville in Melody Motor Lodge, a 1940s motel that was old but very clean.

Oct. 13: Delicious breakfast at restaurant next door. Began pedaling at 9 a.m. The leaves were beautiful. Cool mornings but warming up by 11 a.m. Perfect for riding.

Saw our first train tunnel, "Pinkerton," which is closed. Four or five of us made the entire 45 miles to Rockwood — that includes 924 feet of elevation — where we took over Rockwood Trail House and Gingerbread House, the B&Bs adjacent to the trail.



Photo by Merlin Perry

Bikers on the Great Allegheny Passage

Oct. 14: A day of tunnels. Just before Highway 219 we saw wind mill farms. Crossed the 1,908-foot long and very high viaduct spanning the Casselman River Valley. Colorado contingent laughed when crossed Eastern Continental Divide. Big Savage is a 3,294-foot, lighted tunnel with excellent surface. Emerged to breathtaking views. Borden was the next tunnel, 957-feet long and unlighted. A rider in front of me crashed and went to hospital. All right. Thank God for helmets.

Stopped in Cumberland at Walnut Bottom, a B&B. If I were riding again, I would ride from Cumberland to McKeesport.

Check the Web site for more: [www.GreatAlleghenyPassage.org](http://www.GreatAlleghenyPassage.org)

### NCRT Winter Board Meeting

Saturday, Jan. 10  
10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Roseboro Park Building  
101 Railroad St.  
Roseboro, N.C. 28382

### NORTH CAROLINA RAIL-TRAILS INC. BOARD

Chair	Carolyn Townsend, RN, MPH	919-542-5422
Vice Chair	Dave Connelly	919-544-6372
Secretary	Charles Farley	252-355-6474
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Director	John Morck, AICP	919-362-9822
Director	Merlin Perry	828-754-7362
Director	Nancy Pierce	704-535-7409
Director	Tony Reeve	919-416-0965
General Counsel	David Coats, JD	919-828-0731
Membership	Jean Jenkins Middleton	919-286-7583

\*Primary information contacts

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Pasquotank County	Dave Copley	252-330-4514
Pender County	Martin Beach	910-259-2151
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Pitt County	Charles Farley	252-355-6474
Rutherford County	Eric Wells	828-286-9673
Rockingham County	Katherine Mull	336-627-6270
Sampson County	Ali Turpin	910-229-0924
Stanly County	Lindsey Dunavent	704-986-7409
Stokes County	David Simpson	336-969-6121
Transylvania County	Mike Domonkos	828-884-7648
Vance County	Tom Anderson	252-738-2096
Wake County	Leslie Kennedy	919-362-4011
Halifax County	Christina Gordon	1-800-522-4282

Newsletter: David Newton 919-416-9499 [dnewtonis@verizon.net](mailto:dnewtonis@verizon.net)



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