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Local Groups Announce MYpath Trail System Launch; Smithville Charitable Foundation Grant Adds Funding



A group of people interested in the MYpath project shared a hike along the river last spring. The group included, left to right: Paul Cummings, president of the Owen County Soil & Water Conservation Board of Directors; Cynthia Hyde, Spencer Town Council; Debbie Jordan, Owen County Preservations; Mark Rogers, OCCF Executive Director; Steve Dean, MYpath volunteer; Travis Curry, Editor of the *Spencer Evening World*; Jill Curry, Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs; Bob Andree, MYpath volunteer; and Zoe Dean, MYpath volunteer. (Courtesy Photo by Darrell White)

A cooperative effort between three local organizations will bring new recreational opportunities to the people of Spencer and Owen County. The Owen County Community Foundation (OCCF), the Owen County Family YMCA, and the Owen County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) have officially announced the launch of the MYpath multi-use trail system that will eventually connect the YMCA to the west of Spencer and McCormick's Creek State Park to the east.

"The MYpath name comes from the 'M' for McCormick and the 'Y' in YMCA, but it also speaks to the idea that the trail system can be what each resident wants it to be for their needs. We will all have our own MYpath," said Mark Rogers, executive director of the OCCF.

Along with the launch announcement, the group recently learned that the Smithville Charitable Foundation (SCF) has granted \$60,000 for the project startup. With an additional \$30,000 grant from the OCCF the project is now a reality.

The idea for the trail system has been discussed as a concept for several years, but the parks plan developed by the Town of Spencer provided the final motivation to

launch the project. Spencer currently has only one park property, Cooper Commons, but the input from the community during development of the parks plan was that families around the area are looking for more free or inexpensive activities for the entire family. MYpath is designed to help meet that need.

MYpath will consist primarily of sidewalks in Spencer, many requiring upgrade or replacement, and will also include a Riverfront Trail section and a safe walkway to the school complex west of town which will involve a safe crosswalk for students.

There are several main goals of the MYpath project. The group wants to provide safe walkways for our young residents to use while walking from town to Owen Valley High School, Owen Valley Middle School, and the YMCA. The group hopes to promote more walking and the health benefits it offers to residents. MYpath is also a way to coordinate efforts to clean up, repair, or replace sidewalks in town and make walking around Spencer easier and safer for older residents.

The trail system is also expected to increase the opportunities for healthy family recreation that is local and free to the public. MYpath's connection to the Owen County

Family YMCA will open up more access for local recreational facilities.

"The health benefits of walking to get around town are one of the main reasons the YMCA got involved in the project," said Darrell White, president and CEO of the local community organization. "We love to have folks out here at the facility involved in healthy activity, and MYpath will help make healthy activity part of everyday life for more and more of our neighbors."

The new project is also being designed to embrace the White River, long a key asset to our community but now difficult to use and appreciate for many people.

"We want to provide a new way to access the White River, with the opportunity to learn more about our local natural resources and the White River ecosystem," offered Kelsey Thetonia, SWCD executive director.

Local history groups are also eager to use MYpath to provide information about Owen County's history as a river commerce center and to highlight other historic sites along MYpath.

While the entire project and the connection between the Park and the YMCA will take years to complete, the first phase of MYpath

will break ground in early 2015 and be completed in time for Owen County's celebration of our state's bicentennial celebration in 2016. Phase I will be to complete the MYpath segment from the intersection of Main Street and Hillside Avenue on the north edge of Spencer and continue along the east side of Main Street past the courthouse square and the war memorial south across the Veterans Memorial Bridge to connect with the Riverfront Trail.

The Riverfront Trail will proceed along the river on the south and east bank of the river, possibly along River Road for part of the route, as far as the Department of Natural Resources' river access site. Any land acquisition will be through the willingness of the private landowners, not through condemnation or eminent domain.

McCormick's Creek State Park, the Town of Spencer, Spencer-Owen Community Schools, and Owen County are also supporting the new project. MYpath organizers are also working with the Spencer Main Street group to make sure the efforts of both community improvement projects are coordinated.

The generous grant from the SCF demonstrates that group's continuing support for the people

Please Turn To Page 5

Art Opening, Workshop, Reception Set For December 15 At Whistle Stop Café

by Terry Urban
Special to the
Spencer Evening World

The Whistle Stop Café is pleased to present Becky Schrock's fun and whimsical exhibit of paper-cutting. The opening of the show and reception on December 15th at 10:00 a.m. will include a workshop where participants will make their own snowflake(s). For some people this activity may take them back in time and connect them to their own family traditions. The art of papercutting that began in China prior to the sixth century has become a folk art in many countries and goes by many names - Germany (scherenschnitte); the Netherlands (knippen); Poland (wycinanki); Mexico (papel picado) and Japan (kirigami) to name a few. Papercutting by any name is fun for people of all ages.

Becky's love for working with paper began at an early age. She says, "I have fond memories of my mother making things for me to play with out of the newspaper or brown paper bags. She would make strings of paper dolls, and paper hats. When the holidays rolled around, she cut snowflakes from white paper. She said her mother did those same things with her. I don't remember not making snowflakes for Christmas time. In my early twenties, I began to make more complex snowflakes. I would work holly leaves, candles and stars into the designs."

As an adult, she used the art form as a means of teaching young children. "For a number of years, I worked in an early childhood setting," she said. "While doing this work, I would often use construction paper and scissors to enhance stories I was telling the children. I would make masks and paper

dolls. Sometimes the paper dolls would be aliens, ballerinas or princesses."

Her love for the craft continues and has become more elaborate. "In recent years, I began to use a craft knife to cut designs from heavier paper," she added. "I have cut roosters, Christmas trees, flowers, and other things with the craft knife. I still prefer to cut with my embroidery scissors using computer paper, or origami paper. I make snowflakes. I also like to cut designs from things in nature,

such as trees and birds. I also make angels and hearts. I like to just sit down with paper, and start cutting with no idea of what the paper is going to become."

Becky's work will be on display from December 15 through January 12. The Whistle Stop Café (Area 10 Agency on Aging's congregational meal site) is open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It is located at 500 East Franklin Street (formally Melick's Florist - behind

Please Turn To Page 5



Civic Theatre Returns To Tivoli For Three Comedic Performances Starting Tonight

The Owen County Civic Theatre will present three performances of "In-Laws, Out-Laws and Other People (Who Should Be Shot)" beginning tonight, Friday, at the Tivoli Theatre in Spencer. Performances are set for Friday and Saturday, December 12-13, at 7:00 each night and a matinee on Sunday, December 14, at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10 per person and are available at the Tivoli Theatre box office. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Doors will open 45 minutes before each performance. For more information, call 812-714-8137.

Synopsis: It is 6:00 p.m. and the Douglas family is busily preparing to be invaded by their quirky relatives for their annual Christmas Eve dinner. After robbing a neighborhood liquor store, high strung and irritable Tony, and his dim-witted sidekick Vinny, find themselves in need of a place to briefly hide out. Using a ruse to gain entrance into the Douglas home, they suddenly find themselves in charge of an ever-growing list of family members that they are forced to hold hostage. From smart-aleck teenagers, to nosy neighbors, and bickering adults - the laughs (like the flow of people) are non-stop and we soon wonder who is holding who hostage?! With outrageous characters, laugh-a-minute-dialogue, and a surprise, heart-felt ending, this comic treasure is sure to leave the audience in stitches while celebrating the true meaning of Christmas.

Cast and crew members include Camryn Huffman, Larken Seymour, Nicole VanDerMoere, Roxie Glaze, Brenda Brown, Don VanDerMoere II, Billie White, Eric Howard, Jessica Collins, Lex Barrett, Tyson Jordan, Beth Kyle, Tonya Jackson, Hanna O'Neal, Hailee Kinser, Scott Winders, Lynette Wittington, Jennifer Jackson, Dana Beth Evans, Serena Hart, Justin Rains, Linda Greenwell and Mike Swasey. (Staff Photo)

'A White Christmas' Choral Concert Coming To OVHS Auditorium

It's the holiday season, and no one is more excited than the Owen Valley choral students who are working feverishly to present their annual Christmas Concert, Sunday, December 14 in the high school auditorium. As in past years, there will be two matinee shows, the first at 1:00 p.m. and the second at 3:30 p.m.

This year's theme is "A White Christmas." From seventh graders through high school seniors, the choir members will be singing all kinds of fun, wintry songs, including several selections from the Disney movie "Frozen." In addition to an afternoon of great entertainment, the Delta Theta Tau Sorority will be hosting its annual "Cookie Walk" before, after, and in between each show.

Come and enjoy the talented OV students performing in concert for their community and friends, get some yummy baked items for your holiday entertaining, and share the spirit of the season. Tickets are available at the door as well as through any choir student. For more information, please call the high school choir office at 812-829-2266, extension 328.



Candy Land Christmas

Saturday, December 13 - Downtown Gosport

See Schedule of Events on Page 9



