

THE CRESCENT

THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL

Fall 2002

Vol. XI No. 9

In Appreciation Betty Ann Krahnke

By Henri Bartholomot

Betty Ann Krahnke was a stalwart supporter of the Capital Crescent Trail from the very early days of its conception in the late 1980s until she stepped down from the County Council as a result of her bout with Lou Gehrig's disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. I had first met her when, years earlier, a number of us in my old neighborhood in Bethesda petitioned the County Council to



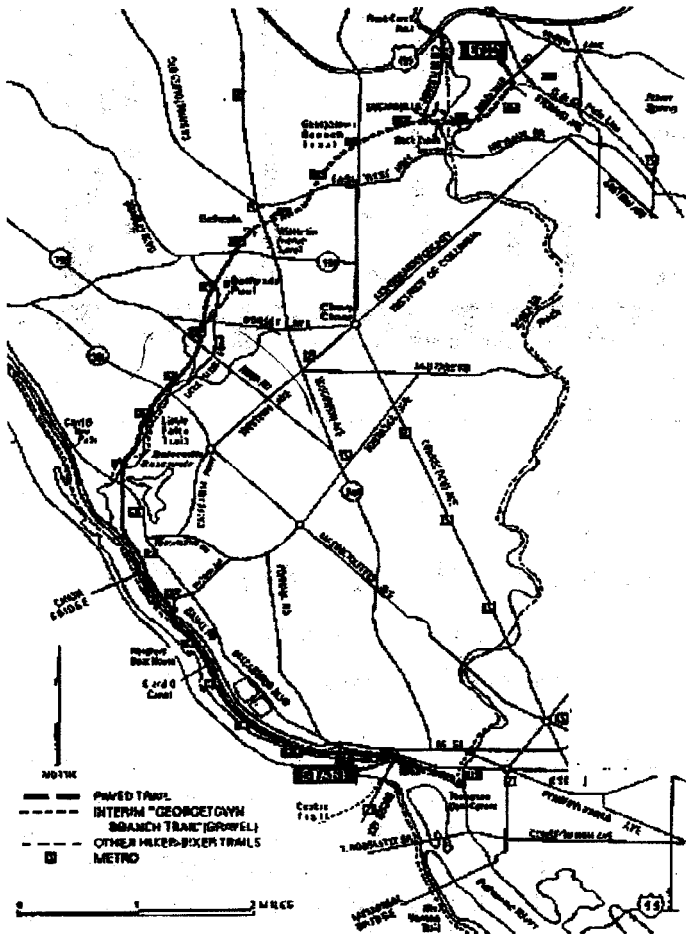
Betty Ann Krahnke demonstrated her support for the CCT in many ways, including this appearance at the CCCT's Open the Tunnel rally in September 1997. With her at this rally are then-CCCT Chairperson John Dugger, County Executive Doug Duncan, and At-Large Councilmember Ike Leggett.

designate a small country store at the corner of Old Georgetown and Greentree Roads as an historic property. After a particularly pointed series of comments aimed at us by then Councilmember Rose Crenca, Betty Ann came up to me and said we had done a fine job and not to lose hope. The store won its designation and still stands today as a place where neighbors and

staff from the nearby National Institutes of Health can come for milk, bread, sandwiches, candy, and other staples, tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the old wood building with its creaky wood floors and deli-style glass displays.

When the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail first formed to advocate that Montgomery County and the U.S. Congress purchase the Georgetown Branch railroad right-of-way, we faced a significant hurdle to get more than \$20 million in funds to buy the right-of-way. Folks like Betty Ann on the County Council saw the benefits of the corridor for trail use very early on. With her support and that of other key Councilmembers including Bruce Adams and Ike Leggett, we were able to secure the necessary funds, and the County bought its share of the right-of-way. The

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CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL
District of Columbia & Montgomery County, Md.



THE COALITION FOR THE CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL
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We request that all entries should be sent to the post office box listed above. Submissions should be sent via e-mail to: jcamp213@fox.com, or by mail to CCCT.

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U.S. Congress came through in the same time frame, providing funds for the National Park Service (NPS) to purchase the D.C. portion of the corridor.

Well, that proved to be just the beginning of a more than 10-year process to get a trail on the ground. After the County and NPS bought the right-of-way, CCCT had to go through a series of planning and funding steps to get the trail approved and built, each requiring County Council approval. First, the Council put a “Georgetown Branch master plan amendment” in place, forecasting that the right-of-way would be used for a trail and at least between Bethesda and Silver Spring might also be used for a transitway. Then each area master plan including those for Bethesda and Silver Spring, had to be amended as it came up for review to



As *The Crescent* went to press, Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan’s office cancelled plans to hold a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the beginning of construction of the Rock Creek trestle rehabilitation due to events involving the sniper terrorizing the area. The event was to take place on October 26, and many political leaders were expected to attend. To demonstrate its ongoing support of the Trail and this project, the CCCT, the Washington Area Bicyclist Assoc. and the Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Coalition were to present a large check, totaling \$132,500, to County officials. Officials hope to reschedule the groundbreaking ceremony soon. For dates and times, check our web page, www.cctrail.org or our phone hotline, 202-234-4874, mailbox 8.

include the trail. Then section by section, we had to get Council approval for funds to build the trail, starting with a small section from Bethesda Avenue to Little Falls Parkway, and over time leading to the trail as we know it today. Each step of the way, Betty Ann Krahnke not only supported the trail, she also worked with Ike Leggett to get the necessary majority vote on the Council. And those votes often were very close, especially as to the section of the trail from Bethesda to Silver Spring.

Throughout these many years, Betty Ann provided her support for the trail as she did all her business on the Council, with wisdom, humanity, and a gentle touch. Always approachable, always smiling, always warm and friendly yet always prepared, always sharp on the details of a proposal, and always effective at helping find positive solutions, she set a high standard for public service. When

we as her constituents and friends first learned that she had been diagnosed with ALS, we were heart broken, given the generally poor prognosis for a cure and the serious, debilitating effects of the disease. But Betty Ann persevered even in the face of such a monstrous illness, remaining on the Council as long as she felt able to serve, and sharing her struggle with her constituents and colleagues - folks who loved and cared for her. Her dignity in the face of such a challenge showed yet another facet of her outstanding character.

With Betty Ann Krahnke’s recent death, she has gained repose and escaped from ALS. But the world has lost a decent human being who provided fine public service over the course of a distinguished career. Fortunately, she has left a legacy, in all the services and facilities she helped secure for County residents. Not the least of these is the Capital Crescent Trail. So the next time you are hiking, biking, jogging, strolling, rollerblading, skateboarding, walking the dog, chatting with friends, sharing time with the family, shopping, going to the library, or just meditating along the trail, tip your hat to Betty Ann Krahnke. In memory of her pivotal role time and again in providing us with this Trail, we owe her a debt of gratitude.

Henri Bartholomot is a former board member of the CCCT.

*The CCCT's response to an August 22nd article written by the Washington Post's
Bob Levey entitled "A Survival Manual for Our Best Bike Trails."*

September 15, 2002

Mr. Bob Levey
The Washington Post

Dear Bob Levey:

Your column of August 23 dealing with survival on crowded hiker-biker trails brought a familiar and not-so-pleasant scene to all of us who have tried to deal with these problems. I'm writing on behalf of the Board of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail; the Coalition is the "friends group" which since 1988 has sought to develop a first-class Trail from Georgetown to Silver Spring and to make it a pleasant and safe place to walk, ride, or rollerblade. We're pleased that you and thousands of others are using our Trail and regret that there are a number of inconsiderate people out there. We've undertaken a number of safety initiatives and we can only believe that problems would be worse without them.

Bells and Whistles: Several times each year, during periods of heavier trail use, we have set up a table at the Bethesda Avenue entrance to the Trail and installed, with no charge, good quality bells on bicycles which lacked warning devices. We have given to rollerbladers, and others who request them, whistles on a lanyard. We have posted signs counseling Trail users to give warning before overtaking other Trail users, and have also advised them verbally.

Signs: Six years ago we requested Capital Crescent Trail management authorities to develop and install signs directing Trail users to keep right and to give warning before overtaking. Lacking any action on the part of these authorities, we had made and installed some safety signs on the Bethesda-to-DC Line part of the Trail. We then worked with Trail management to design uniform safety signs for the Maryland and National Park Service portions of the Trail. Examples of these can be seen between Bethesda and the DC Line, and the NPS has promised installation of similar signs in the near future. Signs are not a panacea, but many people will comply and those who don't will know that they're supposed to.

Safety advice: We include safety tips in the map brochures we make available in boxes along the Trail, and post them on the bulletin boards. We never know whether people pay any attention.

Enforcement: The police who occasionally patrol the Trail tell us that the violators of safety rules usually decide to comply when the police are around. Your suggestion of additional volunteer safety patrols is excellent; volunteer programs exist both for Montgomery County and the NPS parts of the Trail, but they are rarely in evidence, and need to be expanded. Some of us do some "citizen enforcement", calling out "Give warning please!" to bicyclists who charge past without warning, and advising left-lane-walkers as to the Trail regulations.

We welcome columns like yours that call attention to safety problems on the Trail as they facilitate our efforts to get additional funding from Montgomery County Parks and the NPS for safety improvements. You have undoubtedly observed that Trail users include a considerable number of elderly people and children. These groups deserve our best efforts to make the Trail a safe and comfortable place to be.

We will be having a Bells and Whistles event on the Trail from 10 to 12 a.m. on Saturday, September 21 at the Bethesda Avenue entrance, next to the Honda dealership, and would welcome a visit from you or your representative.

Sincerely yours,
Ernie Brooks, Chair CCCT

Feedback from members

Hi,

Thanks for providing such an informative website! I live in East Bethesda, and use the Trail a lot. A friend recently told me that the proposed light rail is as good as done despite my Community Association's stand against it. Is this true?

Thanks for your input,

Karen (via email)

Karen,

Thank you for your kind words about the Trail and our Coalition. While it is true that the County and the State are proceeding with their efforts to place a light rail line in the corridor between Bethesda and Silver Spring, there are a number of hurdles they must still clear in that process. As you may have gathered from our website, the Coalition's role in that process is to insure that regardless of what happens with the rail line, we still have a continuous first class trail located within the Right of Way. We have fought for this for some 15 years, and I believe the politicians and the agencies involved in determining the final makeup of the corridor have come a long way toward believing that the Trail is a very important component of whatever is done there.

Sincerely,

Ernie Brooks/Chair, CCCT

Hello,

Two years ago I took a job at NIH and have very much enjoyed my commute from DC to work using the CCT. One of the main reasons of course is to get away from traffic and aggressive drivers. Well, much to my dismay, I find that bicycles riders can be every bit as aggressive and inconsiderate. Every morning during my uphill ride there are commuters going into town that clearly think nothing is more important than maintaining their pace. They squeeze between me and joggers on their side, never breaking stride, forcing me to change my cadence (and I'm the one going uphill!). I've decided that I'll not take it anymore and I refuse to give an inch to these people who come to my side of the road and expect me to adjust. All they need to do is tap their brakes and wait for me to pass, then a stroke or two and they're back to speed. And many of them give no warning and come within inches of joggers and walkers.

As an avid mountain biker I've grown quite concerned about the number of trail closings to us because of exactly this kind of behavior. There are far too many people out there who don't really know what it means to share. It does not mean other people besides bikers are out here so look out for them, it means to be considerate to other users. I would like to see some kind of movement to get bikers to not be the aggressive drivers of our trails. Some common courtesies would go a long way.

R. Rowland

Washington, DC (via e-mail)

Rick,

Thank you for your interest in, and concern for the Capital Crescent Trail. As you may know our Coalition for the CCT is the advocacy group most responsible for the creation of the Trail, and among the many things we try to stay involved in, trail safety certainly rates near the top. As an advocacy group we can't set policy, but we make sure the policymakers hear our voices, and we have been working on this issue for several years. In addition to working with policymakers, we have held many safety awareness sessions on the CCT, as well as numerous "Bells & Whistles" events, at which we install free bells on bikes, or give out whistles to cyclists and other users. Our message at all such events is one of safety on and courteous use of the trail. In addition, we have run numerous articles in our Newsletter concerning this issue.

Unfortunately, some users of the trail are oblivious to our efforts, and this is very frustrating for us. I can tell you that we will continue to work with the County and National Park Service on trying to improve safety for all users, and will include your comments in our message to them in the future.

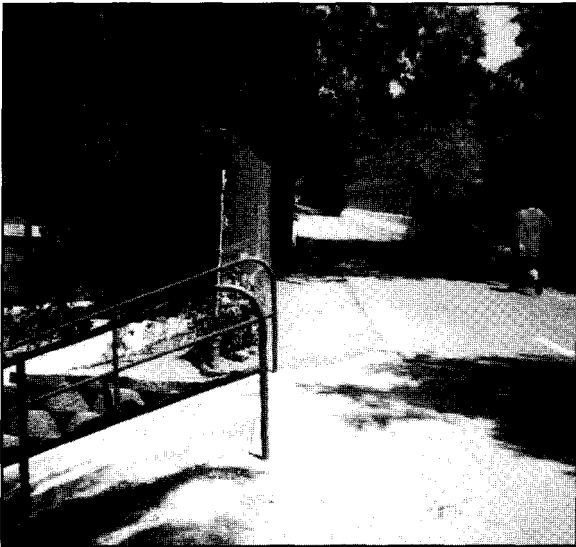
Sincerely,

Ernie Brooks/Chair, CCCT

Planning Board Supports Bringing the CCT to Silver Spring

On July 18, 2002 the Montgomery County Planning Board reaffirmed its position in strong support of beginning work to complete the Interim CCT immediately. The trestle rehabilitation project came before the Board for a Mandatory Referral on the first day that former Montgomery County Councilmember Derick Berlage was seated as the new Planning Board Chairman. The Planning Board expressed its full support for continuation of the project. The Board went on to recommend by unanimous vote that the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) immediately begin work to build safety improvements at the Jones Mill Road crossing, to build a local access trail at Rosemary Hills to take the Interim CCT off Brookville Road, and to build a CCT extension east along the railroad right-of-way toward Silver Spring as far as possible. The Board noted that the County was making a significant investment to open the trestle, but the value of this investment would not be realized unless this much smaller additional investment was made to provide reasonable trail access to Silver Spring neighborhoods. Board Members expressed the view that it is now "Silver Spring's turn" to start seeing some CCT development. The Planning Board vote is only advisory and is not binding on DPWT.

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail will continue to urge the County to fund an access trail between the Interim CCT and the Rosemary Hills Recreation Center as an immediate priority. This proposed Rosemary Hills access trail would permit trail users to continue safely to downtown Silver Spring through the Rosemary Hills Park and on quiet residential streets rather than on dangerous Brookville Road. This connection also would provide easy access to the CCT from the many apartments and homes in the neighborhoods of Lyttonsville and Rosemary Hills. CCCT is also urging the County to begin work immediately to improve safety at the Jones Mill Road crossing. These two projects are each estimated to cost about 10% of the cost of rehabilitating the trestle, and are needed for safe access on the CCT to the trestle from both Silver Spring and from Bethesda.



On October 4, CCCT Chairman Ernie Brooks participated in a panel discussion at this year's Rail-Volution Conference. The Panel's topic was "Spurring Urban Development through the Reuse of Transit Infrastructure". The CCCT's presentation dealt with some of the obstacles it had to overcome in making politicians and citizens see the benefits of establishing a trail in a former railroad corridor that would adequately serve both recreational users as well as those who choose to commute by foot or bicycle. The presentation pointed out the CCCT's many successes, and the challenges that lie ahead in the Silver Spring to Bethesda section of the trail.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All events are rain or shine, unless noted. To confirm, call the Events Hotline, 202-234-4874, box 8, or on the web: www.cctrail.org.

CCCT MONTHLY BOARD MEETING, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, 2nd floor, Bethesda; location is one block west of Bethesda Metro, at the corner of Old Georgetown Rd. and Edgemoor. Meeting begins at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 12 and Monday, December 9 (Call 202-234-4874, mailbox 8, to confirm dates)



Yes! I want to help complete the Capital Crescent Trail and make it safer and more pleasant to use!

Name(s) _____ (H) _____ (W) _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ **E - m a i l** _____
_____New Member -Renewing Member

Individual Contributions:

- Basic Individual \$10**, includes newsletter subscription, action alerts.
- Sustaining \$30**, includes newsletter subscription, action alerts.
- Sponsoring \$60**, newsletter subscription, action alerts, and T-shirt (IF DESIRED), PLEASE CIRCLE Size M L XL)
- Special Honor Membership \$100**, recognition in our annual report, newsletter subscription, action alerts, and commemorative rail spike (IF DESIRED YES) OR T-shirt (IF DESIRED, PLEASE CIRCLE Size M L XL)

**Thanks for your efforts on behalf of the Trail, and in funding the trestle overlooks!]
Here's an additional contribution of \$_____**

Organizational / Business Contributions:

- Basic, \$200 (Crescent)** sent to up to 3 individuals; recognition in **Crescent**
- Sustaining \$500+ (Crescent)** sent to up to 15 individuals; recognition in Crescent, constant recognition on CCCT website with link.

Membership is good for one year from the 15th day of the month that you join.

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

We are **an all-volunteer organization**. I am interested in volunteering, contact me for:
A d v o c a c y **E v e n t s** **T r a i l M a i n t e n a n c e**

We do not share our membership list with any organization except our affiliate organization, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. CCCT is exempt from federal taxation under section 501 (c)(3) of the IRS Code and is **qualified** to receive tax-deductible contributions.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE, www.cctrail.org, FOR ACTION ALERTS AND TRAIL UPDATES.



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