

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ▼

► **LETTERS, FROM PAGE 7**

## **Rail Trail, a gift for the entire community**

**To the editor:**

I am very proud of my town. Last week the citizens of Topsfield turned aside an attempt to delay the proposed rail trail at Tuesday's Town Meeting and further conveyed their agreement with the project by supporting Thursday's ballot question which asked if a rail trail should be built.

The voters of Topsfield tired of the creative charade of scare tactics that the opposition frantically presented to them over the past year: trails result in increased child molestations, cyclists will ride off with their flat panel TV, phony budgets and cost estimates of what the town would have to pay, etc. Halfway through the year even the opponents realized their drama might be going a bit too far and changed their name from the Coalition for Child Safety to a more reasonable Coalition for Neighborhood Information. Name changes or not the voters of Topsfield made it known they're not easily bamboozled.

The real issue, of course, is protecting the abutter's privacy and which is a legitimate one - the rail trail committee should remain committed to providing published updates and holding informational forums for the all during the design and construction pro-

cess. This will help make it the best trail possible while maintaining, if not enhancing, the quality of life for the trail neighbors. I also believe a trail built for all non-motorized uses will help preserve the rural character of Topsfield — there's few things more rural than seeing horses on a trail. And as history seems fairly good at repeating itself, those who live closest to the trail will most likely use it more often, become the strongest advocates for trails, all while their property values increase solely because of their proximity to a trail.

Again, I'm proud of my neighbors and other residents who clearly realize that an abandoned rail road going through our town is a gift of substantial recreational value. And we are especially fortunate to have this resource in a society where debilitating medical conditions such as obesity and diabetes are becoming all too common. In an era where kids live increasingly sedentary lifestyles by spending more time at their computers than outside, we need more venues such as rail trails and linear parks which, when conveniently accessible and used, can help prevent these diseases and others. These public health issues are true long term costs for all of us and ones we can and should be trying to eliminate.

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