



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 18 Issue 3

May/June 2007

For your consideration

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead



Cycling to the Function at the Junction compiled by Stan Sattinger

The Function at the Junction is only a few days away. Details regarding the event can be found on the enclosed flyer or you can head to <http://www.montourtrail.org/function@junction.pdf> for more details. The purpose of this article is to announce several organized bicycle rides that will culminate at the Function, and several walks that will take place prior to the festivities.

One ride begins at Mile 0 near Coraopolis at 10:15 a.m., arriving at the Junction at 12:30 p.m. You can join the ride at the beginning or pick up the ride as it passes by. Contact Dennis Pfeiffer at 412-762-4857 or Dennis.Pfeiffer@PNC.Com

Another ride hosted by Dave Wright, wereallwright@icubed.com, will start at Walkers Mill on the Panhandle Trail at 11:00 a.m. arriving at Primrose around 12:30 p.m.

A third ride hosted by Ned Williams, 724-225-9856 or ned@washtool.com, will begin at Joffre, on the newly completed section of the Panhandle and head east to the Function. Contact Ned for more details. (continues on page 5)

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The Burgh Wrap-Up by John Hooton

It was another beautiful race day in Cecil Park, an upbeat crowd, fun music, ample comfort food and drink. How's that for a recipe for a Trail fund-raiser?

The men's winner was Josh Simpson, 23, from Morgantown, W.Va. with a time of 31:55. Josh finished second last year. In second place was Pat McGuire, 24, from nearby Presto, Pa at 33:02, and Dave Mealy, 23, from Wooster, Ohio took 3rd at 33:31.



Runners prepare for the start

For the ladies, Mindy Sawtelle, 34, from Indiana, Pa. was the winner with a time of 37:55, Leslie Kramer, 29, from Slippery Rock, Pa was 2nd at 40:48 and Courtney McKay of Pittsburgh, Pa. placed 3rd at 42:34

Prizes for the men and women were \$300 for first, \$200 for second and \$100 for third place. Congratulations to all.

Other notables: the oldest finishers were Jane Donnelly, 67, from Pittsburgh at 1:09:52 and Charles Weme, 72, from Crescent, Pa., with a time of 1:29:02. The youngest finishers were Katey Woistman, 13, from Pittsburgh at 1:01:01 and Jacob Hoch, 8, from Bulger, Pa. at 1:24:56. It is excellent to see such a wide age range of participants. Thanks again. (continues on page 5)

MTC Web Address
Visit the Montour Trail web-site at:
www.montourtrail.org



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MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER
Suite 3
304 Hickman Street
Bridgeville, PA 15017
Or E-mail to:
newsletter@montourtrail.org

All other trail correspondence should be addressed:

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. Box 11866
Pittsburgh, PA 15228-0866

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
PHONE NUMBER:
412-257-3011

NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM
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The Prez Sez

I hope all of you have had more than one chance to enjoy the trail now that good weather is upon us. We've started our yearly trail construction and maintenance activities, and we have already held one of our main fundraising events of the year, the Burgh's Pizza and Wings 10K Race and 2-Mile Fun Walk. I want to express our thanks once again to the Daily brothers, Frank, Tom, and Dan for their continued support in hosting, and putting on their 7th annual race. See the article elsewhere in this newsletter describing this fun event.

We have the Function at the Junction coming up soon to celebrate the connection between the Montour and Panhandle Trails. Stan Sattinger, our event director for this celebration, tells us that he and his committee have been working hard to plan an event that should be fun for the whole family. There's a flyer elsewhere in this issue describing what's in store.

If you've been reading the local papers, perhaps you've seen the strides our sister trail organizations have been making towards completing the last nine miles of the Great Allegheny Passage from McKeesport to Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh, hopefully in time for Pittsburgh's 250th anniversary late 2008. We're all looking forward to the day when that trail is finally completed, as well as our own trail's completion, connecting the Great Allegheny Passage to the Airport and the southwest and southern suburbs of Pittsburgh.

Mark

Opening Day 2007



The Montour Trail makes Montour Run easy to access for these fishermen on the first day of trout season, April 14. Montour Run was added to the approved trout waters in time for opening day of 2003 by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

The Montour Trail Council is an all volunteer organization founded in 1989 to convert the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way and the abandoned Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad into a fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

MTC Board Meeting,

every third Monday of the month - 6:00 p.m. at 304 Hickman St., Suite 3, Bridgeville, PA. Turn right off of the Bridgeville exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go straight at next light and make left turn onto Hickman St. just after the Post Office. Call Mark at 724-941-6351 for more information or to get on the agenda.

Cecil Friends:

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil Henderson Road; other months meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-257-2553 for more information.

Airport Area Friends

Friends of the Trail meeting, the Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at the Forest Grove Fire Department. Anyone from the communities of Moon and Robinson is encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information.

Work and cleanup party, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 a.m. Call 412-262-3748 for more information and location.

Bethel Park Friends:

Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park

Trail segment is encouraged to come. For Clifton Road Bridge Committee meetings, contact Peter Kohnke at 412-854-1835 for more information.

Work and cleanup party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 a.m. Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.

South Hills Friends of the Trail

Meeting first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Jefferson Hills Borough Building. Work and cleanup parties scheduled and advertised as needed. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler@verizon.net, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownp@comcast.net

Fort Cherry Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, second Wednesday of the month at McDonald Borough Bldg., Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. Work and cleanup parties, scheduled as needed. For more information, contact Ray Johnston at 724-356-2621.

Peters Township Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Parks and Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m. For more information on work and cleanup parties, please contact Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132, or for monthly meetings, Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at markingrund@comcast.net.

Trail Dust From the Editor's Desk

During the summer of 1989, I received membership information from an organization called the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Peters Township had the Arrowhead Trail, having purchased their portion of the former Montour Railroad and converting it into a trail, which, I had been using regularly. I thought, would it not be great if the same could happen to the remainder of the right-of-way?. So, I sent my money in and became a member.

Shortly there after, I received an envelope with letterhead from a dentist in West View. Why would a dentist from West View be seeking new patients in South Fayette Township, I asked myself. Well, it was Dino Angelici and his accomplice Stan Sattinger, or is that the other way around, inviting local RTC members to a meeting in September to discuss what I had been thinking: converting the abandoned Montour Railroad into a trail. It was this public Robinson Township meeting that would begin to formalize the founding of the Montour Trail Council. Of course, Stan and Dino would become the first President and Vice President of the Montour Trail Council, respectively.

Several of those in attendance thought we could build the trail in five years making 1994 or 1995 the target date for completion. It was in the third year, 1992, that the first section in Cecil Township was constructed, 15 years ago. Moving ahead to the present, the MTC has completed 44 of the 56 miles of the trail system and is about to celebrate a major accomplishment: a connection to another Trail. On June 9, the MTC will formally connect to the Panhandle Trail.

When I joined this group 18 years ago, I really thought it would be a difficult task to build this Trail because it was such a radical idea at the time and in a region that favored automobiles over bicycles. I am glad to say my thoughts were narrow-minded. This idea continues to spread across the region and as a result, rail-trails are becoming common. The Montour Trail Council was an early leader in rail-trail conversions in the region and we should be congratulated on the success of this project. They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and the MTC has many imitators.

On June 9, trail users of all ages will celebrate one of the successes of this effort, as two major trail systems formally celebrate their connection near McDonald, Pa. The insert this month is a flyer describing the event and the lead article of this publication describes the bike rides and walks that will precede the event. We look forward to seeing you there.

Dennis

Deadline for submission of articles for July-August Newsletter will be Friday, July 6, 2007.

Meet the Ride Director and Race Registrar by Bill Orr

The last edition of the newsletter included an announcement that we had found 2 great, energetic volunteers - Sam Hvitfelt and Angela Cubbison - to fill the positions of Tour the Montour Ride Director, and the Montour Trail Half Marathon Race Registrar, respectively. I sat down with our new volunteers to learn more about them and why they got involved.

Bill Orr: Where do you live?

Sam Hvitfelt: Hopewell, Pennsylvania

Angela Cubbison: Langeloth, Pennsylvania (near Burgettstown)

BO: What areas of the trail do you most often use?

SH: When bicycling after work, the parking lot by Schmidt's Tavern out to the end and back; on the weekends, the entire 23 miles. For running: out either direction from the Pitt Stop.

AC: My husband Burt and I try to experience as much of the trail as possible. However, our main areas of use is the Imperial section between mile markers 6 & 8; Robinson Twp. between mile markers 2 & 5; and McDonald mostly around the Montour-Panhandle Connector.

BO: Why did you want to get involved with the Montour Trail?

SH: I fell in love with the Montour Trail on my hybrid bike about 4 years ago. I put 1,400 trail miles on my bike that summer. I have participated in the Tour the Montour each year since it started. I started appreciating the trail for running the following year.

AC: Helping this organization is a wonderful opportunity to enhance something that we use in our everyday lives. We walk our new puppy on the trail 5 or 6 times per week. We are so grateful for having access to this wonderful resource, and we wanted to give back as much as we could in order to ensure that it would be there for future generations to enjoy.

BO: Do you do any other type of volunteer work?

SH: I have been a Cycle and Triathlon Mentor in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training program for the last 3 years. I also volunteer and assist at a variety of local charitable events and activities including Empty Bowls and other Leukemia Society events.

AC: I am a strong advocate for Animal Friends, I also participate at PNC for Days of Caring and Grow-Up-Great sponsored events. I've served as a committee member for the PNC Investments' Make-A-Wish Golf Tournament and look forward to volunteering for the Junior Golf Tournaments this year at Quicksilver.

BO: On behalf of the Montour Trail Council, I'd like to thank you for your time and commitment to fill these very important volunteer positions.

Note: The newsletter would like to publish more articles similar to this in the future. Maybe you have a Trail volunteer or a user that you would like to recognize. Please submit your article to the newsletter@montourtrail.org for consideration.

Camping on the Trail

Long distance or "through-riders", as they are sometimes called, are using the Montour Trail more frequently as the Trail becomes more contiguous. These riders are ones who intend to spend several days on their bikes, many headed over the Great Allegheny Passage to the C&O Canal and points east, and many are doing the opposite, heading westward from Washington, D.C. to the Montour Trail and points westward. Recently one of our members, Troy Bogdan, rode with such a rider on his way to Chicago to visit family and friends. Last summer, several of us rode with a cyclist from England who was riding to Washington, D.C. from Pittsburgh.

For those who are members of the Yahoo Groups associated with the Montour Trail or the Great Allegheny Passage, there is a frequent thread that appears: Where can I stay overnight, be it the comfort of a B&B or hotel, (or for those who wish to rough it) a place to pitch a tent and sleep under the stars? The rider that was mentioned previously on his way to Chicago was fortunate enough to have a trail neighbor allow him to sleep over in his yard.

So, at a recent Montour Trail Board of Directors Meeting, it was proposed that a "Camping Committee" be formed to study locations along the Trail that could serve as camp sites. If you are interested in serving on this committee please contact Charlie Beaumariage at his email address: cjbeau@att.net or via telephone: 412-531-6994.

Dispensers for Doggie Doo Bags

Ever come to the Trail with Fido or Fifi and forget your bag to pick up after them? Have no fear, if you are a frequent user of the Cecil Section of the Trail. Eagle Scout Candidate Brian Nicholson has built baggie dispensers and has placed them at the major trailheads. Dog waste was becoming a problem, especially for users who like to stay on the grassy shoulders where possible. Brian's dispensers pictured below are very simple. The "house" is made from composite material similar to the materials being used today for outdoor decks mounted on a 4x4. The South Fayette Shop N'Save donated the plastic produce bags.



Just like the grocery store, the bags are on a spindle and can be pulled out of the slot and separated on the perforated line. The dispensers are being placed near trash receptacles for obvious reasons.

The Burgh Wrap continues from page 1

There were 276 runners and about 75 walkers. Thanks for your support!

Thanks also to the many individual volunteers and groups who register everyone and staff the race course to maintain our perfect safety record. And where would we be without the sponsors? Come to Burgh's Bridgeville restaurant— we hope you'll see your picture as one of the "faces in the crowd"!



The men's winner, Josh Simpson, 23, from Morgantown, W.Va. crosses the finish line.



The ladies winner, Mindy Sawtelle, 34, from Indiana, Pa finishes.

Twilight Trail Walk V

On Friday, July 27, from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., The Friends of the Montour Trail in Peters Township will host the Fifth Twilight Trail Walk along the Arrowhead Trail. The walk will start at two locations again this year, from the west at St. Petersburg Center, located at 210 Valleybrook Road, and from the east at Farmhouse Coffee/My Big Fat Greek Gyro, located at 502 Valleybrook Road. This year's event promises to be as fun as the past four.

For a \$5.00 donation, participants can take a three-mile walk along the luminaria-lit trail. Participants will also receive a glow necklace to light their way, and an entry into a raffle for great prizes from local businesses. There will also be refreshments and entertainment is planned. Children under 5 and pets are free.

If it is raining, the walk will be rescheduled to Saturday, July 28 at the same time. For additional information, or if you would like to help with this event, please contact sueheadley@comcast.net or markimgrund@comcast.net. All proceeds benefit the construction and maintenance of the Montour Trail in Peters Township.

Function at the Junction continues from page 1

A fourth ride sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen will be a road and trail ride. The ride will start at the Upper Saint Clair Municipal Building at 10:00 a.m. and head into Bridgeville via McLaughlin Run Road to pick up Route 50, passing by Cecil Park around 11:00 a.m. before accessing the Trail at Southview. **Contact Barb or Joe Rudolph 412-653-5888 or jprud1950@hotmail.com**

There will also be walks beginning at the Junction prior to the commencement of festivities.

Start Point: Panhandle/Montour Junction (festival site)

Start Times:

5-Mile Walk begins at 10:30 a.m.

3-Mile Walk begins at 11:00 a.m.

2-Mile Walk begins at 11:30 a.m.

The staggered starts will allow all walkers to finish relatively close to each other at 12:00 noon, when the festivities kick off. We are basing this on a 20-minute-per-mile pace to allow you to take in the sights.

Parking: Parking will be available at the Robinson Twp. Municipal Building on Noblestown Road. To access the Trail from here, we will have signs showing where to cross the road. to access the Connector Trail, and follow that just a short distance to the Junction.

Course Descriptions:

Two-Mile & Three-Mile Courses: Both the two-mile and three-mile walks are straight out and back courses along the Panhandle Trail from the Junction heading into McDonald and back to the Junction. The three-mile walk will take you just past the McDonald Trail Station. There are only a few road crossings, and we will have volunteers to help keep you safe.

Five-Mile Course: This course will start at the Junction, but head back along the Montour Connector and across Noblestown Road. You will then continue until you hit the Montour Trail and then turn left onto the Montour main line. You will head over the McDonald Trestle for a spectacular view of the valley below. At 2.5 miles you will turn around and head back the same way you came.

Aid Stations: Water stops and basic first aid if needed will be on all courses at various points.

Rain or shine the Walks will go on, so come out and join us for a great time.

View maps of the courses, including elevation charts, online at:

Five-Mile Route: <http://www.usatf.org/routes/view.asp?rID=126828>

Three-Mile Route: <http://www.usatf.org/routes/view.asp?rID=126835>

Two-Mile Route: <http://www.usatf.org/routes/view.asp?rID=126845>

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY BY BOB CIMINEL

By noting the changes in stations and online customers over its 103-year existence, one can learn a lot about the history of the Montour Railroad. Incorporated on September 10, 1877, the Montour began operating over 4 miles of track between Montour Junction located on the south bank of Ohio River at the east end of Coraopolis, PA (P&LE interchange) and Guys Mills near the present site of .

In September 1878, the North Fayette Railroad built an additional 5 miles of track to Valley Church and merged into the Montour Railroad, which then extended the track 2 more miles to the town of Imperial in 1879. In October 1879, the Montour extended its main line an additional 3 miles beyond Imperial to reach the Partridge Mine.

In 1901, the Pittsburgh Coal Company incorporated and began purchasing the independent coal mines south of Pittsburgh, including the Imperial Coal Company and its affiliate, the Montour Railroad.

The Montour, faced with the inevitable depletion of the coal reserves along its main line between Imperial and Montour Junction, organized the North Star and Mifflin Railroad in 1912 to construct a 34-mile extension to Mifflin Junction. There, the Montour would interchange coal with Andrew Carnegie's Union Railroad to supply the steel mills along the Monongahela River. The Montour merged the North Star and Mifflin and began operating along the new track between North Star Junction and Mifflin Junction in February 1915.

Between 1915 and 1921, the coal mines that were the impetus for the Montour Extension went into operation and the Montour began servicing 10 mines as a captive railroad of the Pittsburgh Coal Company.

In 1918, the Montour constructed the 2-mile long Library Branch to reach Pittsburgh Coal Company's Montour No. 10 Mine. The Muse Branch and National No. 3 Spur became operational in 1921, and the Midland Spur extended 2,200 feet from the main line at Gilmore Junction to reach the Morris Mine in 1922. The railroad added 4 miles to the Midland Spur in 1927, creating the Westland Branch out to the Westland No. 1 Mine.

The Pittsburgh Coal Company built the huge Champion Preparation Plant in 1928 on the Montour main line. This gave the railroad traffic in both directions; hauling raw coal from the mines to the preparation plant and cleaned coal to its many connections with other railroads. Coal moved from the Montour to the following railroads:

- * Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad at Montour Junction,
- * Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railway at Southview and Longview,
- * Pennsylvania Railroad at McDonald and Hills,
- * Union Railroad at Mifflin Junction.

In 1929, the Montour extended the Library Branch 3 miles to new connections with the Pennsylvania Railroad at Gould and Pennmont and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Snowden.

The Montour prospered through the Thirties and Forties, reaching its zenith during World War II. In 1946 the Pittsburgh Coal Company merged with the Consolidated Coal Company of Maryland and sold the Montour Railroad to the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railway as equal partners. The Montour adopted PRR operating procedures and used PRR engineers to review its construction projects and track modifications. Although many coal mines closed after the war, industrial and commercial traffic, and a fairly continuous flow of coal from Montour No. 4, No. 10, and Westland No. 2 mines kept the Montour operating.

The Montour's downfall began in 1976 when Conrail sold or abandoned large chunks of property it inherited from the bankrupt Penn Central. Conrail sold its 50 percent ownership in the Montour to the P. & L. E. Over the next 9 years, the P. & L. E. took apart the Montour in a manner similar to the way it was pieced together in the 1800's and 1900's

Between 1976 and 1977, the P. & L. E. abandoned 2.6 miles of track between Longview and Mifflin Junction, severing its connection with the Union Railroad. The P&LE also abandoned 1.4 miles of track between Brightwood Spur and Salida, severing ties with the Norfolk and Western. The 8.4 miles of main line between Thompsonville and Brightwood Spur, which included the Library Branch, gave up the ghost in 1980. Another 8.9 miles of main track and the Muse Branch were abandoned in 1982. The last crew called on the Montour Railroad reported for duty at 10 a.m. on November 1, 1984 to haul a few cars off the property at Montour Junction. The crew spent 1 hour and 15 minutes on duty. P. & L. E. abandoned the remaining 26.6 miles of main line, and the Westland Branch, in 1985.

Bob Ciminell is the founder of the Montour Railroad Yahoo group (http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/). There are currently 166 members from across the country. You are encouraged to join. There is a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad at this location and you can pose questions of its membership, from whom you are sure to get an answer.

Welcome New Members

The Montour Trail Council would like to welcome these new members and thank them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have renewed their membership and remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.

New Members

Bernadette Albertson
 Timothy R. Anderson
 Brian Barbour
 Timothy A. Basinski
 Steven R. Brown
 Portia Capuli
 Richard Corbson
 William Ehlen
 Rev. Dr. Roger Fischer
 Ms. Kathy Frankel
 Richard W. Gailey
 L. Michael Gallagher
 David Gregory
 Charles Lamb
 Christine Luczak
 Brian Luzik
 Claire Mankowski
 Brad R. Miller
 Dawn Morrison
 Roy B. Negley
 Wayne L. Ohlinger
 George Ondis
 Gregory M. Pate
 David A. Perez
 Francis C. Pizzurro
 Michael J. Ravasio

Bryan Seip
 James Smith
 Max Stevenson
 Douglas Watkins

Leader's Circle

Leslie J. Broglie
 Amy Harkins
 David Oyler
 David A. Perez
 E. Steven White

Benefactors

Jacques B. Foster
 John Gombita
 Pete Grondziowski
 David F. Hajnik & Debora B. Thompson
 Daniel J. Hirsh
 John Kennon
 Pete & Janet McGuire
 Paul T. McKeown
 Douglas McMillen
 Rachel & Ched Mertz
 Henry Pecher
 Francis C. Pizzurro
 Stanley D. Solak

Eight years ago....



June 1999: A ribbon-cutting ceremony concluded the dedication of the Panhandle Trail, Pennsylvania's 100th rail-trail, on June 5, 1999. The new trail crosses the Montour Trail at Primrose in Washington County, Pa. (it passes under the McDonald Trestle). It will eventually connect Weirton, W. Va. and Walkers Mill near Carnegie, Pa.. Pictured below: official opening of the Panhandle Trail by Washington County Commissioners Burns, Irely and Ferguson.

(courtesy of the Montour Trail News Archive)

I want to help complete the Montour Trail!

I want to join the Montour Trail Council at this level:

- Student/Senior** \$15
- Individual** \$25
- Family** \$35
- Supporting** \$50
- Sustaining** \$100
- Benefactor** \$250
- Leader's Circle** \$500+

Make checks payable to the "Montour Trail Council"
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Don't Forget

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