

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

VOLUME #3 ISSUE #6

A Bi-monthly publication of the Montour Trail Council

WINTER 1993

TRAIL COUNCIL GETS ANONYMOUS GIFT

The Montour Trail Council is pleased to announce that it has been the recipient of a \$50,000 grant from an anonymous donor. This donor is also providing the Montour Trail Council a \$100,000 challenge grant. If the Trail Council can raise \$300,000 from other sources, the anonymous donor will grant the Trail Council the additional money.

DRESSING TO ENJOY THE COLD OUTDOORS

by Dino Angelici

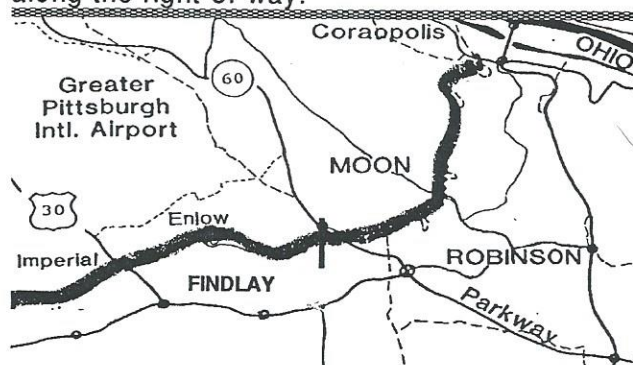
You really can dress comfortably and still ward off most of the chill during winter outdoor activities. With cycling in particular, one should dress in layers. I prefer a polypropylene turtleneck jersey closest to the skin because it has the property of being able to take moisture, such as sweat or rain and move it away from your body and toward the next layer. For me, that next layer is wool. In the outdoors I've never found wool to be itchy and it has the essential property of being able to keep the body warm even when it is completely wet. Cotton, on the other hand, has been known to be deadly to outdoor adventurers in cold and damp conditions, because when cotton becomes wet, it uses your body heat in an attempt to dry itself. The result is rapid loss of body heat and possible death if the individual cannot be warmed quickly enough. The outer layer should be a shell or windbreaker jacket that is lightweight and impervious to wind and rain. Don't forget protection for the head, hands, and feet. Wearing all of this clothing is not as encumbering as it may sound. Done properly, you can remain very light and comfortable in the face of the elements.

TRAIL COUNCIL TO BEGIN FOCUSING ON THE MOON- ROBINSON AREA

The Montour Trail Council will be holding its next meeting in the Montour High School Cafeteria on Monday, January 25, 1993 at 7:30 P.M. The high school is located on Clever Road in Robinson Twp. This meeting will have a similar format as last year's Cecil Township meeting. The meeting will serve to inform interested residents of the Moon and Robinson Township areas of the Trail Council's trail construction plans in the Montour Run Valley. People will also have the opportunity to express their interest in volunteering their time or services in constructing this portion of the trail. We especially encourage our members who live in the Airport area to attend and to bring others along as well.

Montour Trail Council's own Bill Metzger will break the ice as he will give a short presentation on bicycling in Glacier National Park, Montana.

The Trail Council would like to take this opportunity to thank the Public Works Departments of Robinson and Moon Township who are assisting in cleaning up the right-of-way during slack time from their regular duties. They are helping to clear and cart away rubbish and brush along the right-of-way.



Area of interest to be discussed at meeting

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL VIPS

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VICE PRESIDENT	DINO ANGELICI
SECRETARY	PETER KOHNKE
TREASURER	JACK SWISHER

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AIRPORT VICINITY : TIM KILLMEYER 787 - 1472

Moon	Dennis Pfeiffer	262 - 3748
Robinson	Frank Keppel	859 - 3020
	Steve Schotting	787 - 2079
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WASHINGTON COUNTY : JACK SWISHER 221-7708

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR DENNIS SIMS

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL PHONE NUMBERS

For Information	412 - 831 - 2030
For Administration and Business	412 - 257 - 2328

The Montour Trail-Letter is published bi-monthly by the Montour Trail Council. Deadline to submit copy is the 25th of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

The Trail-Letter is printed through the courtesy of Mail and More in Carnegie with the help of Mark Addlesturger.

TRAIL COUNCIL INSTALLS VOICE MAILBOX SYSTEM

by Arnie Schulberg

The Montour Trail Council has installed a voice mailbox system to improve communication with people seeking information about specific problems, and to allow for increased communication by the Board of Directors between board meetings. People calling the Montour Trail Council number - 257-2328 are greeted with a message directing them to various sub-mailboxes as follows:

1 Jack Swisher	Treasurer
2 Dave Wright	Engineering / Operations
3 Stan Sattinger	President
4 Dennis Sims	Communications
5 Jerry Agin	Membership
6 Dino Angelici	Programs
7 Bill Metzger	Speaker's Bureau

Those choosing not to use a sub-mailbox or having real estate questions will use the main mailbox.

At the last Board of Directors meeting, it was suggested that a sub-mailbox be set up as a "hotline". This sub-mailbox would allow friends of the MTC or those members not having a sub-mailbox to leave messages concerning activities affecting the trail. **If you wish to utilize the "hotline", please dial 257-2328 and leave a message on sub-mailbox 8.** Messages in this mailbox will be reviewed periodically. The mailbox will be "cleaned" on the 15th and last day of each month.

Anyone having a question concerning the voice mail system should contact Arnie Schulberg by leaving a message in the main mailbox.

ENJOY THE FINDLAY SECTION

Even though the Findlay section is not entirely complete, it is usable for a variety of uses such as hiking, mountain biking, and if it ever snows again in substantial quantity, cross-country skiing. This three mile-plus section awaits Duquense Light's installation of a power line before the surface is completed. Once this surface is in place, this section will become suitable for road bikes.

Thanks to Browning Ferris Industries (BFI) who provided the dumpsters and a place to dump the removed trash from this section.

Peter Kohnke 854-1835

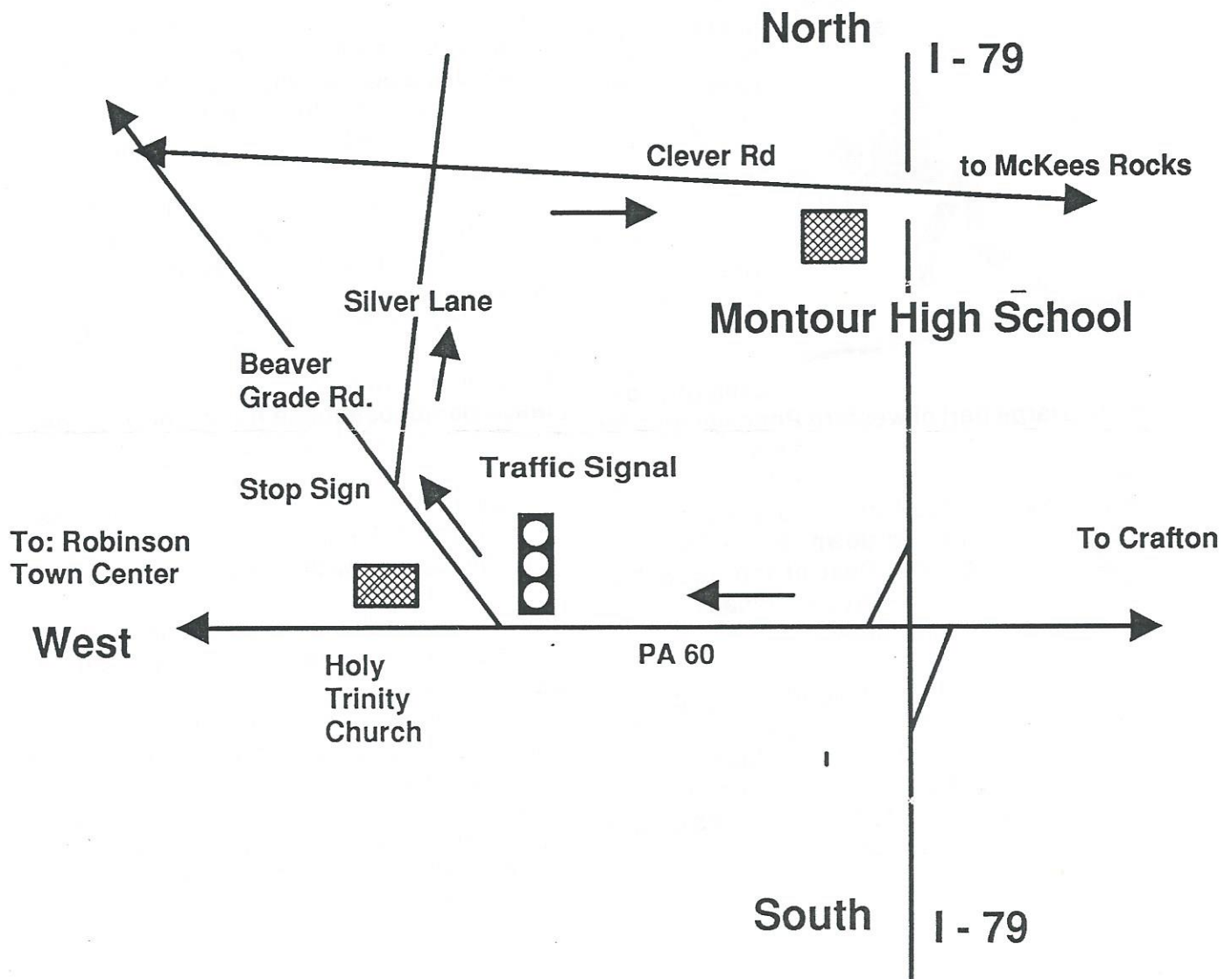


MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL COMMUNITY MEETING

WHERE: Montour High School Cafeteria on Clever Road in Robinson Township

WHEN: Monday, January 25, 1993 at 7:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: MTC's own Bill Metzger will break the ice describing his adventure last August cycling in Glacier National Park, Montana. Then the main feature of the night will be a description of the Montour Trail Project and a session for the attendees to volunteer themselves or their services to aid in the construction effort in the Montour Run Valley.

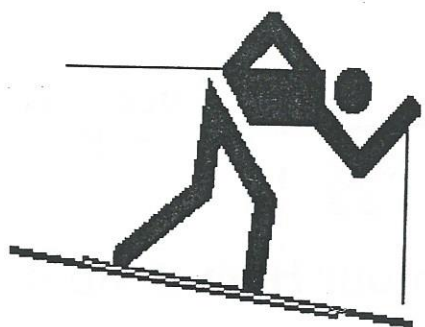


SKIING THE MONTOUR TRAIL

by Dennis Sims

Two years ago, I bought myself a cross-country ski outfit and then preceded to make my winter weather forecast which contained little snow and warm weather. Darn, if, I was not right! Any snow that did fall was gone by afternoon and you had to get out early if you wanted to do any skiing.

Last winter saw some improvement with some good snow in January and March and cold weather to preserve the snow for more than a day or so. Even if there wasn't snow on the ground locally, an hour's drive east, and up into the Laurel Highlands was rewarding.



Cross-country skiing was finally getting fun.

The end of the second week of December, 1992 brought a major snow-

fall to a large part of western Pennsylvania for the first time in years, and the Montour Trail was a recipient of this winter bounty. Living only a few minutes from the Hendersonville Trailhead, I ventured down to the Trail that Friday morning after most of the snow had fallen, anxious to use my skis locally and on a decent covering of snow.

To my surprise, I found the footprint of only one person who had trudged through the snow. Otherwise, the trail surface was an unbroken field of white as far as I could see. I was about to make the first ski tracks on this portion of the trail. Unfortunately, I have track

skis, and the process of breaking through the wet heavy snow was a chore and by the time I had reached the I-79 twin spans, exhaustion had taken over and it was time to return. Having made tracks allowed for a much easier return trip.

Returning to the car, I struck up a conversation with a couple of Hendersonville's residents who were surprised to see anyone on the trail. They had told me Cecil Township had just plowed the road before I arrived.

Nordic skiing was a pleasure the next several days as the snow was slow to melt and temperatures were slow to warm. A few other nordic skiers also took advantage of the snowfall and by the end of the weekend tracks were set the entire 4.5 miles of the Cecil Section. Unfortunately, some trail users were using the ski tracks for a walking path as the snow was packed down, and walking in these tracks was easier. A few other folks had plowed portions of the trail leaving an icy surface.

A lot of work is put into making those tracks by cross-country skiers, and skiers using the trail at later time prefer to use these ready made tracks. It is no fun to hit a frozen footprint when you are in a good diagonal stride and lose your cadence and end up in the snow, rather than sliding over it. So, please do not use these tracks for a footpath if you see them when walking on the trail. Likewise, a nordic skier will not use your footpath in the snow. There is plenty of room for both the skier and the walker/runner to enjoy his activity without conflict.

The nordic skiers would like to thank Jack Swisher who made a valiant attempt to make tracks with the Trail Council's tractor. The width of tires are nearly perfect for cross-country ski tracks. Jack ran the tractor in the Hendersonville area and was able to pack down the snow making the glide easier. If anyone knows how to make true cross-country ski tracks mechanically please leave a message for me or Jack on our voice mail system.

THE THANKSGIVING RIDE ON THE MONTOUR TRAIL

by Dino Angelici

Nobody's going to show for this ride now, I thought to myself while driving on I-79 toward Bridgeville. After all, it was a mere 36°F and a heavy drizzle had quickly soaked the road surface. I stopped at Spinosa's Dairy Mart in Cecil, to fill my thermos with hot coffee. I was fixin' to wait for a half-hour or so before returning to the comfort of home.

To my amazement, a half dozen cars with bike racks were being emptied and some cyclists were stretching their legs in the parking lot as I approached about 9:45 am. In all, nine hardy souls, afflicted with an early form of cabin-fever had arrived by the 10 AM starting time. We walked our bikes over the river, through the woods, and up the ramp to the Montour Trailhead.

The drizzle continued as we started down the trail in high spirits. The crushed limestone surface below us was still quite firm considering all the recent moisture. We encountered several friendly and courteous pedestrians along the trail. After passing through the tunnel, we were approaching the Hendersonville terminus where I was considering a shortening of the ride distance. Since I was bringing up the rear, it was impossible to stop the lead riders as they blew past the craft shop and on toward Peters Township.

I spoke with Bob and Sandy Lumish and they commented that while the trail had offered us serene and pleasant riding conditions, the roads often provided more interesting scenery. Safety must be sacrificed and terrain must be conquered to enjoy the beautiful view from atop Hahn road and the Greenmoor riding stables with their blue-grass flavor a little down the road.

We passed through the small town of Lawrence, aka Hills Station, and had a steep

downhill run out of town. We crossed Chartiers Creek at the bottom and entered Peters Township. The road was now called Valley Brook. We noted 2-3 large bridges which had been torn down. These used to be part of the Montour Railroad Right-of-Way (MRROW) and along with several others still standing and one tunnel all in need of rehabilitation, constitute a major obstacle in achieving a connection between the two completed trails in the near future.

We passed the sanitation plant and went under Route 19 before reaching the western terminus of the Arrowhead Trail. For Don Anthony, who worked so hard on the Cecil section of the Trail, this was his first visit to Peters. He was favorably impressed with the paved surface, the shoulders for pedestrians and runners to escape to, the many side trails, connections' to neighborhoods and other township parks, and enhancements such as a parking lot entirely for the handicapped. The Township is to be commended for creating such an exceptional recreational facility.

Several of us stopped at the Hike 'N' Bike shop at trail side to get warm and to use the facilities that are graciously offered to bicyclists by the owner. He allowed us to hang around as long as it took to get warm again. Then we rejoined the rest of the group which had begun the return trip to Cecil Park.

Bob Purdy had become a bit chilled and was starting to shiver a bit on this stretch which was slightly downhill and required little energy output. I have taken this opportunity to discuss proper clothing and its placement as the key to enjoying winter cycling and other outdoor activities in the story on page one.

Fortunately, Bob warmed up considerably on the uphill ride back to Hills Station. Steve Nydes preferred to take the MRROW on his ATB to avoid the hill and still meet us at the Hendersonville craft shop where our group agreed to convene. Paul McKeown elected not to stop at the craft shop and continued on to his car. Al Pahanish, the owner of

(Please see TRAILRIDE on page 5)

TRAILRIDE (continued from page 5)

the shop, is very bike friendly. He too allows cyclists to use his restrooms and has a small cafe set up in the front area of the shop. The area is fully stocked with hot beverages, sweet rolls, muffins, and ice cream. Our group was taking full advantage of the menu when Steve arrived.

He commented on how beautiful the section he had just completed was. The MRROW which has not been completed yet in that area will be a spectacular one once properly rehabilitated. In one area, there is a high bridge over Chartiers Creek which disappears into the Greer Tunnel. Exiting the tunnel, one immediately crosses a truss bridge which is elevated over the still Conrail line. From the same bridge there is a tremendous view of Pleasant Valley Country Club, its golf course and the surrounding countryside. So much for the roads being more scenic than the Trail

It was unanimous that despite the weather, we had a good time, our Thanksgiving stuffing was sufficiently worked off, and it was better than being a couch potato. Other folks on the 24 mile ride who weren't mentioned in the article previously were Ray Rota and Stan Sattinger. We all talked about coming out for an "Icycle Ride" on New Year's Day. Al Pahanish said he would open the craft shop if he had some notice. Sounds like a date to me!

THE MONTOUR ICE TUNNEL

The highlight of the Cecil Section of the Montour Trail is the National Tunnel. In winter, this highlight should be renamed the National Cave. Those nuisance drips of water during the summer are forming beautiful icicles dangling from the tunnel ceiling for its full length.

Unlike their limestone cousins, these icy stalactites form quickly during cold spells in a matter of days rather than centuries. Some of these icy daggers are only a few inches in length, but many are several feet in length reaching halfway to the tunnel floor. As you walk through the tunnel, you will have to step over the icy debris from icicles that have become too heavy and have succumbed to gravity, or have been broken off by the wind.

As you walk through the tunnel, the best vista of this natural work of art is to look in the direction you are walking. The smooth ceiling has become a sea of icy points. Beware, however during warm spells for falling ice as you trek through the tunnel, cave, cavern, grotto.....

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