Volume 33 Issue 4 July-August 2022

Plaque Dedication at Kurnick Plor

The Montour Trail Council dedicated a plaque honoring its founding board members on Saturday June 11 at the Cecil Henderson Rd Trailhead (Kurnick Campground). This area is part of the first section of trail opened for public use in October 1992.

MTC President Deb Thompson thanked the founders and the innumerable volunteers and supporters who have worked together to help make the Trail a great regional asset.

State Senator Camera Bartolotta noted the perseverance of the founding members, celebrating "the dedication and commitment of a group of people who got together 33 years ago and had an idea and they just didn't quit!"



Pictured are (L to R): George Schmidt, Dave Wright, Lee Wilson (Dick's widow), Ned Williams, Tim Killmeyer, Peter Kohnke, Jason Ortitay (State Representative, 46th district), Dennis Sims, Camera Bartolotta (State Senator, 46th senatorial district) Representative Jason Ortitay expressed his appreciation and admiration for everyone "who had the vision for the trail and put in years of hard work and dedication to make it a reality for the millions of people who have the opportunity to use it. It's truly amazing what a group of people can accomplish."

A half-dozen founders, many of whom are still active, made remarks. They are Dennis Sims, who founded and is still active as the President of the Cecil Friends and Montour Trail Trail-Letter Editor; George Schmidt, who with

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		https://www.facebook.com	/

groups/43518292159

his wife Maggie came in from Chicago; Dave Wright and Paul McKeown, both of whom are deeply involved with the MTC's Engineering and Construction committee; Deacon Tim Killmeyer; and current MTC board member Peter Kohnke.

Lee Wilson (representing her late husband Dick Wilson), thanked the Council for honoring Dick and said that "Dick felt the Montour Trail was the culmination of his life's work."

While Founding President Stan Sattinger was not able to attend, he shared these lines which were read by Past President Ned Williams:

It Was Love That Built the Montour Trail

The Love of nature sought a non-intrusive link.

The Love of fitness wanted a suitable place to rebuild.

The Love of trains gave this relic a new kind of future.

The Love of landscapes gave pleasing form to this emerging gem.

And the Love of toiling volunteers kept them coming back to do more.

Let us, the users, find common ground in our shared Love for the Trail.

It's the age-old story of Love begetting Love.



Deb Thompson President **Phillip Torrez** Vice-President Shirley Ulaky Treasurer Fran Hensler Secretary Jen Mosesso 2020-2022 Jim Richter 2020-2022 Dave Tetrick 2020-2022 Don Thobaben 2020-2022 Deb Thompson 2020-2022 2021-2023 Fran Hensler Dave Jackel 2021-2023 Mark Modispacher 2021-2023 David Ovler 2021-2023 Tom Prezel 2021-2023 Julian Wolfe 2021-2023 Dave Borrebach 2022-2024 Mark Imgrund 2022-2024 Peter Kohnke 2022-2024 Phillip Torrez Shirley Ulaky 2022-2024 **Ned Williams** 2022-2024

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM

Dennis Sims, managing editor

Mark Imgrund Dennis Pfeiffer

Prez sez... The E-Bike Conundrum

Perhaps one of the knottiest problems in the history of the Montour Trail is how-the-heck to deal with e-bikes. We started a rail-trail in the days when no one knew what that was, managed to rebuild after Hurricane Ivan in 2004, and rebuilt the McDonald Trestle and the Library Viaduct, but it seems that none of these has generated the hand-wringing and controversy as deciding how to manage e-bikes.

First, let's be clear about the definition of e-bike, or electric bicycle. An e-bike is a bicycle (or tricycle) with an integrated electric motor. E-bikes are manufactured in two general categories: pedal-assist and throttle-control (power-on demand). Pedal-assist cycles provide extra power while the user is pedaling. The pedals must be operated or the bike will not move. The throttle-control models allow the bike to be operated without pedaling, rather like a scooter. However, throttle-control cycles can also be operated in pedal-assist mode. (A model which does not include a pedal-assist mode is called an electric motorcycle, and does not meet the definition of e-bike.) Check the Wikipedia page for Electric Bicycle for more information.

Over the past couple of years, e-bikes have become tremendously popular, with use expanding to the point where it is no longer viable to ban the from the trail. The new devices come with both advantages and disadvantages. On the side of advantages, e-bikes allow people with physical limitations to enjoy more and longer rides than may have been otherwise possible. E-bikes also permit slower riders to join up with their faster friends without feeling that they are constantly holding everyone up. However, disadvantages include the fact that e-bike riders often travel at higher speeds, creating unsafe conditions and disrupting the quality of the trail experience for other users, potentially damaging the limestone trail surface, and sometimes encouraging unsafe behavior by other trail users. The risk related to higher speeds can pose problems for both the riders and fellow trail users. The Montour Trail is a multi-use trail, so safe and enjoyable conditions need to be maintained for all of our user groups, including cyclists, walkers, runners, pets, and children

As the Montour Trail is privately owned, Federal and State highway rules, as well as state park regulations do not apply, and we have the authority and responsibility to set ruels for the Trail. E-bike rules were first established for the Trail a few years ago, and these were updated earlier this year. More changes are likely as we continue to grapple with this situation, so please continue to follow our newsletter and website for current information. Here are the current rules, available at www.montourtrail.org. E-bikes must:, Continues on page 5.

Upcoming events

September 22 at 6;00 p.m. Tour the Montour packet pick-up at Trek in Robinson Townahip

September 24: The Tour the Montour Ride

October 1: South Hills Penny Day: South Hills and Peters

Otober 8L South Hills Penny Day in Bethel

November 6 at 5:00 p.m. Annual Meeting at St. Joan of Arc Church in Library

Ittiends' 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 the Montour Trail Office for more information or to get on the agenda.

Airport Area Friends: (MP 0 to MP 12.6 and the 6.3 mile Airport Connector) The Airport Area Friends of the Trail meet every second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Forest Grove Fire Hall, 2044 Ewings Mill Road, Robinson Township, PA 15108. New volunteers are always welcomed. Contact Mark Modispacher at 412 266-1544 for more information. Numerous "work parties" are held during the season. Please call 412-262-3748 to lend a hand at the work parties.

Fort Cherry Friends: (MP 12.6 to MP 20.7)

Friends of the Trail meeting: Second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the McDonald Trail Station, 160 S. McDonald Street, McDonald, PA 15057 (adjacent to the Panhandle Trail). Work and cleanup parties will be scheduled as needed. For more information contact Tim Thomassy, 724-926-4617 or Chuck Hughey, 724-926-9436.

Cecil Friends: (MP 22.0 to MP 28.5)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil Henderson Road; other months (with the exception of November and December) meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-496-4308 for more information, or email densimwx@comcast.net

Peters Township Friends: (MP 28.5 to 30.4, Library Jct to near MP 35 and part of the Bethel Branch)

Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Community Recreation

Center and varying locations during warmer weather at 7:00 p.m. Work and cleanup parties on the first Friday and third Saturday of every month at 8:30 a.m. For more information, please call Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132 For monthly meetings contact Wayne Pfrimmer at 724-747-9766 or by email at waynepfrimmer@gmail.com

Bethel Park Friends: (The 2.75 mile Bethel Branch and a short piece of main line trail around MP 35). Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Caucus Room behind the Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. Work and cleanup party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 a.m. Call Bill Capp at 412-833-5928 for location and information.

South Hills Friends: (MP 35.4 to 46.6)

Meeting second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room or the Township Library located at the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park, 15129. Work and cleanup parties on the second Saturday of the month. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler1950@gmail.com, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownp@comcast.net

The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

The Westland Friends: (MP 21.0 to 21.9, and Westland Branch) Standard meeting schedule is third Thursday of

the month at 1:30 PM at MTC Office in Bridgeville. During Pandemic, meetings have been moved outside to Galatit trailhead pavilion. For more information contact Dave Hajnik at 412-498-3854 (text enabled) or dave@theneonweb.com

Note: Some of these meetings are still being held virtually these days due to the pandemic. Please contact the appropriate individual to verify physical or on-line meeting specifics!

Remember When

1992: 30 years ago: Adjacent land owners in Washington County were informed of future trail construction.

1997: 25 years ago: MTC supporters took a bus ride to see the trail.

2002: 20 years ago: Cecil Township began police patrols on their section of trail.

2007: 15 years ago: The Function at the Junction is held to celebrate the connection of the Montour and Panhandle Trails.

2012: 10 years ago: The bridges at Hendersonville are completed

2017: 5 years ago: John Kammeraad and Ava Dzurenda win the JR Taylor 5K.

A New Digger!



On 16 June, The Montour Trail Council took possession of its first excavator. Pictured below, Bobcat representative Tony Zappia (center) presents the keys to Engineering Committee Co-Chair Gil McGurl. Also, pictured Engineering Committee Co-Chair Tom Prezel (far left), Maintenance Crew Chief Mechanic John Kozak, and Board member Dave Jackel (far right).

MyMTC: Promises Fulfilled

The Montour Trail Council's new membership, donation and event management system, MyMTC, is fulfilling its promise. As many of you have personally experienced, we're using MyMTC to manage memberships, donations, and key events.

The system is now alerting those whose memberships are about to expire and makes online renewal easy. Volunteers who work behind the scenes to track and manage MTC memberships and donations are finding MyMTC easy to use, accurate, and a significant time-saver.

Registrations for the Gateway Engineering 20th Annual Tour the Montour are being managed through the system, enabling members to receive a discount when registering. Raffle tickets and extra t-shirts can also be purchased when registering.

If you're reading this Trail-Letter after receiving an emailed link, MyMTC carried the message to you.

If you haven't yet tried MyMTC, go to the MontourTrail.

org webpage and click the yellow MyMTC button. Once you've logged in, you'll be able to review your membership

Coraopolis Clean Up On The Montour Trail And The Strange Things That Were Found!!

On May 12, an Airport Friends' Volunteer, led a clean-up group of 3 Boy Scouts and 2 parents starting at the Trail Terminus in downtown Coraopolis. The group worked for 2 hours and cleaned up approximately 0.8 of a mile. The area they worked on is underneath the bridge that connects Coraopolis to Neville Island. Among the interesting things that were found were a toy fire engine, 2 bicycle wheels, a side panel from a truck, a stereo, a vacuum cleaner, a window screen, a summer canvas folding chair, plastic buckets, an

Interpretive Signs Installed by Eagle Scout Candidate

Two new interpretive signs have been installed on the Montour Trail as an Eagle Scout project by candidate Dan Parker of Troop 510 in South Park. One sign is at the former site of the Montour Mine #10 in Library (mile 36.2) depicting the history of the mine and its supporting complex of shops and utilities. A second sign highlighting the history of the Montour Railroad and of the Montour



Eagle Scout candidate Dan Parker and members of Troop 510 install signs in Library.

Trail was placed near milepost 36.

Dan researched, planned, raised funds, and constructed the signs, with guidance and assistance from the Montour Railroad Historical Society.

Boy and Girl
Scouts with an interest
in completing any
type of award projects
along the Montour Trail
should contact the Scout
Project Coordinator
by emailing scouts@
montourtrail.org.



assortment of empty glass bottles and aluminum pop cans, and 2 bottles of MD 20/20 – Banana Red flavor, no less!!

The crew gathered enough trash to completely fill the trail truck. They loaded the trash and off they went to the Western Corridor garage near Cliff Mine Road. Once they arrived at the garage, the crew, unloaded all the trash and placed it into the dumpster. Each scout completed 2 conservation-related community service hours toward their rank advancement. Additional clean-up days may be planned for the Fall. The Airport Friend's Group was extremely thankful for the work that the Boy Scouts did.

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Happy 20th Anniversary Tour the Montour! By Pat Friedsam, Tour Director

The Tour the Montour is 20 years old! It seems like a good time to research its origin. I spoke with Tim Killmeyer, our fabulous t shirt designer who has been designing for the same length of time. He told me that one day Bill Orr said 'we should have a bike ride' and the Tour was born. But what Bill tells me is that because of his work in other charity rides, Phyllis McChesney contacted him and that a committee consisting of Phyllis, Dennis Peiffer, Tim Killmeyer, and Frank Keppel was formed with Bill as Director. Meeting at Tim's home, they decided to use the event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the trail. They came up with the name of "Tour the Montour". I have interviewed several of the committee members. The first title sponsor was Thermo Fisher Scientific and that helped secure many of the sponsors that we have had to this day. I have gone back through the newsletters from the beginning of the Tour and the evolution was documented. Starting from a small ride of 100 participants and some rest stops and food under tents at mile 0, it evolved into the ride boasting over 500 cyclists riding in a fun ride -not a race

In 2004, the start of the ride had to be moved to Boggs as much of the trail had been destroyed by Hurricane Ivan. But the group pushed forward and the cyclists came to show their appreciation. Lunch was rigatoni and meatballs. There was fruit and Powerade offered at a few rest stops.

Sam Hvitfelt became the Tour leader for the 5th ride. That ride had over 200 cyclists. The trail was repaired by then and the start was again at mile 0. The King and Queen of the Mountain races at Hassam Rd were featured in the 8th Tour. Polka dot jerseys were awarded. But several Tours later, this was discontinued as there was fading interest in that race. Lunch was first mentioned in the 9th Tour newsletter article. The early packet pickup was introduced in the 10th Tour and was held at REI for many years. Raffles were also a feature. Sam moved to South Carolina in 2016/17.

The Tour weathered the Covid Pandemic by becoming virtual in 2020. We were amazed about - and grateful for- the many people who continued to support this signature fundraiser for the Trail.

This year, because of the construction occurring at Mile 0, we moving the start of the ride to Mile 4.8. Parking will be at the parking lots of the "PittStop" and "At Home" on Montour Run. This is exit 58 from the Parkway West. There again will be package pickup but at TREK in Robinson as REI at Settlers Ridge has closed. We will again feature goodie bags, a tradition started by Sam Hvitfelt's team years ago.

We have 5 raffles this year. They include;
\$500.00 gift certificate from Pro Bike & Run
Bicycle Clothing gift certificate from AeroTech Design (Coraopolis)
Yakima Hitch Tray Bike rack for 2 bikes (U-Haul, North Hills)
Escape 3 Giant from Tandem Connection (Hendersonville)
The above tickets are \$5.00 apiece or 3 for \$10.00
Pedego Electric Bike \$2495.00 donated by Pedego McDonald
(please read trail rules for electric bikes)
The above ticket is \$10.00 apiece or 6 for \$50.00

We again have fantastic baskets and silent auctions including hotel stays and casino "stay and play".

There will be the rest stops with snacks and beverages and the ride will be followed by lunch at the Forest Grove Sportsmen Club. (there will not be parking available at this venue) Helmets are required for the ride. Waivers must be signed by the participants or guardians.

Please visit Montourtrail.org and sign up for the Tour!

Bill Orr, Dennis Pfeiffer, Tim Killmeyer, and Frank Keppel will be at the start of the ride to start us out on another great 20 years!

The Prez Sez continues from page 2

- nave pedals and be operated only in pedal-assist mode.
- 2 have 750 watts of power or less.
- 2 weigh a maximum 100 pounds.
- 2 be no more than 36 inches wider.
- be operated at a speed safe for conditions, but no faster than the15-mph speed limit.

These rules are intended to keep e-bikes operating within conditions compatible with other trail use and users, and to maintain the quality of the trail experience.

These rules do not apply to mobility-impaired visitors, for whom separate rules are posted on our website. Also note that these rules apply only to e-bikes. Other electric-powered devices (one-wheels, razors, electric motorcycles, scooters, etc.) are prohibited. As always, all internal-combustion engines are prohibited.

Remember, our goal here is to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. We have struggled with negative feedback from riders who want to go as fast as they can, but higher speeds are simply not safe and appropriate for the Trail.

The Montour Trail is maintained and administered entirely by volunteers, whose work includes keeping up with new technology like e-bikes. If you'd like to help us, drop an email to

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

Imperial and the Montour Railroad By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

An important location on the Montour Railroad, especially in its early operating years, was the town of Imperial. The Imperial Coal Company was the founding owner of the Montour Railroad in 1877. The railroad's original tracks ran from Coraopolis to Guy's Mill, about five miles up Montour Run.

The North Fayette Railroad Company was formed August 1, 1878, to extend the railroad from Guy's Mill to the town of Imperial.

Before any business or construction began, in September 1878 the North Fayette Railroad was merged into the Montour Railroad.

A terminal facility with a stone engine house, water tower and other facilities were built at Imperial to service the Montour locomotives.

These facilities were nicknamed "Montour City", located near the sites of Valley Presbyterian Church and the current Findlay Township Activity



A Montour passenger train stops at the station in Imperial. The water tower and maintenance facilities are to the right of the tracks.

#2 mines.

Center. Tracks were run to the nearby Margerum Mine, which had a tipple located near the current St. Columbkille Church site. This is where the locomotives took on their coal loads. October 1879 saw the main line tracks extended two miles further south to the new Partridge Mine.

In 1899 the Pittsburgh Coal Company was formed with the purpose of buying and consolidating over 75 coal companies operating in southwestern Pennsylvania and Maryland. These acquisitions included the Imperial Coal Company and the Moon Run Coal Company, which held all capital stock of the Montour and the Pittsburgh & Moon Run Railroads. In anticipation of increased coal traffic and thus a need of larger locomotives, Pittsburgh Coal built a large shops facility at Montour Junction in Coraopolis. It opened in 1900, and the terminal facilities at Imperial were shut down.

The North Star and Mifflin Railroad was formed in October 1912 to extend the Montour from Imperial to a connection with the Union Railroad at Mifflin

Junction, establishing access to several new mines being opened in the Pittsburgh South Hills. By the end of the year, the North Star and Mifflin was merged into the Montour Railroad. The new extension began railroad operations in 1914.

In 1913 the Montour Shops in Coraopolis were sold by the Pittsburgh Coal Company to the Montour Railroad and the old facilities in Imperial were abandoned. A new wye track was built at North Star, just south of Imperial to enable the steam locomotives to be turned for better operation. North Star replaced the abandoned wye at the Imperial Terminal.

During the 1920's, several realignment projects were undertaken to improve the railroad right-of-way and eliminate several problem areas. A tunnel was bored through a hillside north of Imperial, eliminating about a half-mile of track with several sharp curves. The railroad called this tunnel Jeffreytown for the community at its eastern end but it is known as Enlow by the Trail Council for the community at the west end nearest Imperial.

Another project saw the main line raised and moved to bypass the abandoned Imperial Terminal. It added a bridge over Route 30, eliminating a dangerous grade crossing which had a high accident rate. Several coal mines serviced by the Montour Railroad were located in or near Imperial. The Marshall Mine was



Ttrack gang installs the east switch at North Star Junction near Imperial ca. 1913.

Photo courtesy Andy Hanna / Kevin Kovach collection

northeast of town, with a railroad spur crossing McClaren Road to reach the mine. The Clinton Block Mine was on a spur running on the north side of Route 30, reaching the mine near the current Findlay Township Sports Complex. The Margerum Mine in Imperial was mentioned earlier. Jean Mine was located south of Imperial above North Star Road. Partridge Mine was further south of town at the end of the original railroad line at North Star. Several mines were also located in the Boggs area, including the Sunnyhill, Maraca, Rider, Solar, Boggs and Russell

Some of these mines were originally underground mines when they opened in the first half of the 1900's and in later years were reopened as strip mines to recover coal left in place during underground mining. As these mines played out, the Montour's focus shifted from Imperial to the newer mines further east along the main line.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Historical Society through Facebook by searching for the Montour Railroad Historical Society. There are currently 425 members from across the country. 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. There is also much information at http://www.montourrr.com

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I want to support the Montour Trail Council! **Annual Membership Level** Become a member now! ☐ Leader's Circle.....\$500 + Montour Trail Council Go to MontourTrail.org/help-us/join ☐ Benefactor.....\$250 - \$499 Use Only MONTOUR or scan the Q-R code with a smartphone ☐ Sustaining.....\$100 - \$249 ☐ Cash ☐ Supporting.....\$50 - \$99 ☐ Check ☐ Family\$35 Taken by____ ☐ Individual.....\$25 Date____/____ ☐ Student/Senior.....\$15 Contribution enclosed: \$ _ Make checks payable to Montour Trail Council STATE ____ZIP ____ **Montour Trail Council** Suite #3, 2nd Floor PHONE 304 Hickman Street F-MAII Bridgeville, PA 15017

Welcome New Members

The Montour Trail Council welcomes these new members and thanks them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have recently renewed their membership and to remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants. Not all new members have been entered as of print deadline and will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter.

Louis Anstandig Synda Beasley Burns Holly Bernardi Rick Bizick Steve Boehmer Tom Busse Christopher Caruso James Čavrak Amy Conaway Judy Cornell Michael Dudenas Mike Dunn Jay Ferris Lynn Gamcik David Gannon June Goodman-Dudenas **Edward Greenebaum** Ken Hale Nancy Henderson Julie Henry Amanda Holland-Minkley Brian Hritsko Catherine Keally Kimberly King Daniel Kysela George Lesko Bob LeValley Nancy Levine Thomas Lusk Katie Mannarino Lawrence Martin Sarah Mateja David Mayernik Linda McClelland Bob & Julie Mihalco

Neil Missig

Samantha Misurda

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Kathleen Oberle

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Dolores Casali

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In memory of Jim Robbins

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Maureen Mouer

In memory of Jim Robbins

Chris Nagoda Brooke Öllander Mark & Caryn Ollander Jamie and Patrick Oney Jale Opeka Wayne Pfrimmer Richard Robbins Stan Sattinger Nella Storm Michael & Elizabeth Wheat William Zinn

In memory of Richard Wilson Lee Wilson

In honor of Tim Graettinger

Eric Raphael



The Airport Friends Gazebo



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