

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 13 Issue 4

July / August 2002

For your consideration

You have to have a dream so you can get up in the morning.

Billy Wilder

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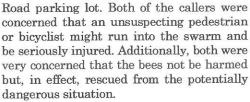
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MTC Web Address

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

Quick Thinking and Teamwork Saves the Bees, Keeps Montour Trail Safe

On Friday, May 24, alert trail users Millie Getty and Peggy Donnelly of Bethel Park made phone calls to MTC President Peter Kohnke and me. The message: A swarm of honey bees had settled in close proximity to our Trail near the Irishtown



Following a series of calls to exterminators and the Carnegie Museum Entomology Department, we contacted Chuck Aaron of Clayko Exterminating in Greensburg. Chuck is also a beekeeper. He was excited and delighted with the news of our "find." We made arrangements to meet at the Irishtown Road parking lot the next morning, Saturday, May 25.

The swarm appeared innocent enough; it looked just as though someone had bundled up an old, dark brown jacket and draped in over a small tree. On closer inspection, however, you could see thousands of bees, each about one-half inch long, all either clinging to or crawling around on each other. Chuck estimated there were approximately ten to 15 pounds of bees in the swarm!

He placed an open hive beneath the swarm, which was about three feet from the ground. He then twitched a branch. The swarm seemed to slip off the branch into the hive like a mass of dark buzzing pudding. Chuck



then lit a curious little contraption that looked like a tin coffee pot with a funnel on one end and a bellows on the other, which he used to make "smoke" to sedate the bees for transportation. Chuck was as interesting as his methods. A wiry

fellow in his seventies but with an iron constitution, he is used to working outdoors and probably capable of out-working a man half his age. He was completely comfortable with the bees, not in a scientific sense, but as something he'd grown up with that formed a link all the way from his childhood to the present. The hour I spent with him kept me as enchanted as the bees, listening to his flowing discourse on the ways of honey bees, the difficulties in keeping a colony healthy, how and when they seek a new hive, and how endangered they have become. I had the feeling that he would have been saying the same things in the same easy and natural manner had I been there to listen or not.

After waiting about that hour to allow stragglers to enter the hive, he placed the lid on the hive, put it in his truck, and left for home. By noon, the Queen and her court were on their way to a permanent and protected home in Westmoreland County.

To Millie and Peggy, who first noticed the hive, thank you for your interest and initiative. A vanishing resource has been given a real chance at survival. As Chuck Aaron said so well, "Ain't seen a swarm like this in, maybe, thirty years! Ain't likely to see another."

Stan Olenn



MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Newsletter

Astrid Cook

Editor

Circulation Manager Joan Schweiger

all beliweiger

Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

So at last they've arrived: The dog days of summer.

Of course, to a trail enthusiast, that's a bit of a misnomer. After all, what could be better than long days and warm evenings for taking full advantage of our beloved Montour Trail? No matter what your favorite activity, summer is the time to exploit the sunshine and heat (just be sure to carry extra water) and to enjoy extended or more frequent jaunts on your favorite stretch of trail.

Or, perhaps, explore a new trail section. A frequent user of the Bethel Park spur, I am always surprised by the variety the Trail has to offer when I venture out and take a walk along a path I've never before traveled. Now that my daughter's bike has shed its training wheels, we may even attempt a longer trip via bicycle that so many others before us have enjoyed on a regular basis.

And this summer offers some of the best Trail gazing in recent seasons. This spring's heavy rains have made for lush green trees and flora; vivid purples, yellows and whites among the wild flowers; and fluttering bursts of orange, blue, brown, black and all variety of other colors our native wildlife offers as butterflies and bees, birds and small mammals scurry along beside us.

Some people view the summer heat as a time to escape to air-conditioned comfort or the many area pools. We Trail users know, however, that the time to enjoy summer goes by all too swiftly, and we won't be wishing away our opportunities to bask in these dog days while they last.

Astrid

ATA Hosted at MTC Offices

The Montour Trail Council (MTC) Office continues to be a great asset in assisting the MTC in its trail building mission. Physically the office has served us well. In fact the MTC had the pleasure of hosting the monthly board meeting of the Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA) at the office on the morning of April 12th. A warm Montour Trail welcome was extended to all members of the ATA Board. Also that afternoon some of the ATA members were able to attend the grand opening of the first "18 miles" at the county line.

Dennis Pfeiffer

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	1	1

Calendar of Events

MTC Board Meeting — July 15 MTC Board Meeting — August 19 Allegheny County Rib Cook-Off — August 31, Sept. 1-2

August 2002							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Eri_	Sat	
				1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

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.

Montour Trail Benefits from FITness

For four weekends in April and May the idea of FITness took on a whole new meaning on the Montour Trail. On those Saturdays and Sundays a group of hard-working men and women in a program known by the acronym FITS cleared over four miles of unfinished trail in Mt. Pleasant and Cecil Townships in Washington County. The brush, tree, and railroad tie clearing was in preparation for the construction of the section of trail between the McDonald Trestle and the intersection of routes 980 and 50 to begin in late summer 2002.

The acronym FITS stands for Furlough In To Service, a program within the Community Services Office of the Probation Services Department of the Washington County court system. The program provides an opportunity for non-violent offenders serving work-release and weekendonly sentences in the Washington County Correctional Facility to leave the facility during weekend daytime hours to work in supervised community service projects in Washington County. The program's clients are carefully selected and must maintain good work records to remain in the program. FITS has completed such projects as the rehabilitation of two houses for the Washington City Mission, the building of a playground in Centerville, the remodeling and painting of the old Venetia School for conversion into a community center, the painting of 19 fire halls throughout the county, and bank clearing and flood control on hundreds of miles of streams in the county. During its five years of existence, FITS has provided communities and organizations with the manpower to complete difficult and labor-intensive projects the organizations would be otherwise unable to afford and has created for its clients a closely-monitored, positive and meaningful way to pay their debt to society.

FITS projects can be scheduled for any community or nonprofit organization, such as the Montour Trail Council, operating within Washington County. As the program's popularity spreads, requests for weekend work are expanding to (Continued on page 6)

Comments & News

Your opinion means a lot to us. Send your comments or news information to: Montour Trail-Letter 304 Hickman Street Bridgeville, PA 15107 or E-mail to: newsletter@montourtrail.org

Newsletter Deadline
All articles for the July / August Trail-Letter
will be due no later than June 1, 2002

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

PAGE 3

- ♦ MTC Board Meeting, every third Monday of the month 6:00 pm 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 Peter at 412-854-1835 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ♦ Cecil Events:
 Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth
 Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the MTC
 Offices, 304 Hickman St., Suite 3, Bridgeville, PA.
 Call 412-257-2553 for more information.
 Work & Clean-up party, every third Saturday of the month 9:00 am. Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 412-257-2553 for more information.
 - Moon/Robinson Events:
 Friends of the Trail meeting, the Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 pm., at the Forest Grove Fire Department. Anyone from the communities of Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information.
 Work & Clean-up party, every second Saturday of the month 9:00 am. Call 412-262-3748 for more information and location.
- Findlay/North Fayette Events: Friends of the Trail, call Don at 724-899-3695 or Pete at 412-788-4136 for more information. Work & Clean-up party, every fourth Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 412-788-4136 for more information.
- Bethel Park Events:
 Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm 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 & Clean-up party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month 8:30 am. Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.
- South Hills Trailblazing:
 Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party, last
 Saturday of every month. All volunteers are welcome.
 For more information call Paul Mckeown at 412-835-
- Fort Cherry Events: Friends of the Trail Meeting, first Wednesday of the month at McDonald Borough Bldg., Council chambers at 7:00 pm. Work & Clean-up parties, scheduled as needed. For more information, contact John Wasko at 724-796-3781, or Joe Seibel at 724-693-2523.

National Trail Day Brings out MTC Supporters

MTC President Peter Kohnke promised good weather for National Trail Day on June 1, and despite the horrific storms that blanketed the region the evening before, he was good to his word. Saturday offered nearly cloudless skies and dozens (perhaps hundreds) of Trail users took advantage of the warm and breezy day to show their support for the Montour Trail.

This year marked the 10th anniversary of the event originally begun by the American Hiking Society in 1993 as an effort to show regional support for conservation and awareness of hiking trails. Nearly every spur of the Montour Trail had volunteers hosting events and greeting Trail users throughout the day.

One of the most poignant of the events was hosted by the Cecil Friends Group, which held a dedication ceremony in memory of Don Berty of Cecil Township. The ceremony was part of an Eagle Scout Project by Steve Dristas (son of Cecil Friends' Secretary Joan), who helped add two bulletin boards, a memorial garden and a plaque commemorating Don. Don was a strong trail advocate for many years, serving as Vice President of the Cecil Friends group, in addition to being a supporter of the Boy Scouts. Don's widow, Joan Berty, did the unveiling at this touching ceremony.

Don Berty was further remembered by a \$20 donation in his memory to the Fort Cherry Friends. The group set up an informational table and requested donations at the Giant Eagle in McDonald, where they collected over \$230.

The Friends of the Montour Trail in Bethel Park took advantage of National Trail to hold a fundraiser to benefit the Clifton Road Pedestrian Bridge. About \$500 was collected with promises of more checks to be mailed in later. Full color renderings of potential future bridges were posted in hopes of increasing community awareness of the project and to help find more people to drive the effort. Volunteers who helped included Bill and Roxanne Capp, Peter Kohnke, Bob O'Connell, Stan Olenn, Mike and Patti Pucci, Joe Goodwill, Clayton Olsen, Dan Stadler, and Jay Wells. Amy Reichman organized the effort. The participants were encouraged by the results and will soon decide when to host a similar event.

Other groups handed out "freebies" that were generously donated by area businesses, along with handing out information about the Trail in general. Whether it was because of the friendliness of these "meet and greet" stations or just the fine day, everyone on the trail seemed to be in happy moods for this year's National Trail Day.

Astrid Cook

Well Excuuuse Me...

The 2001 Annual Report, which was included in the May/June 2002 issue of the Montour Trail-Letter, neglected to include PghConnect as a donor in the \$250-\$499 category. PghConnect is the sponsor of our website. We regret the error.

We mistakenly omitted National City in the donors list in the last issue. National City donated over \$3,000 for the printing of 25,000 trail maps. Thanks again National City.

The Montour Trail Office zip code is 15017. It was mistakenly shown as 15107 in the newsletter.

WASTE MANAGEMENT DUMPSTER DONATION HELPING TO KEEP MONTOURTRAIL CLEAN

Few people think of dumpsters as a high-priority item for any nonprofit organization. But a generous in-kind donation from Waste Management Inc. is helping the Montour Trail Council solve one of its nagging problems-how to take care of trash along the trail.

Waste Management Inc. has installed large dumpsters at two heavily used trailheads on the Montour Trail-Cliff Mine Road in Findlay Township and Beaver Grade Road in Robinson Township-and has committed to emptying the dumpsters regularly.

The Montour Trail Council has had trash cans at both trailheads, but emptying the cans as quickly as they fill up and hauling the trash to the nearest municipal dumpster has been a difficult burden.

"Waste Management Inc. is helping to keep the Montour Trail greenway beautiful," said Jesse Forquer, the Montour Trail Council board member who worked with the company to determine dumpster locations. "We can't thank them enough for their corporate partnership. The estimated value of this in-kind donation and pickup service is nearly \$3,000 per year-plus a significant time savings. "We used to have to bag the trash first and then haul it for miles," said Forquer. "Now I can just empty our cans into Waste Management's dumpsters."

Bruce Barron

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

Larry & Donna Barger Robert Barron Lois Betts Dr. Louis Civitarese Crafton-Ingram Rotary Golden Triangle Bikes Richard C Haggerty **Amy Harkins** Bobbi Harris George N. Kovatch Judy A Kuzior Lyndell Ford Miller Mr. & Mrs. D. Thomas Mistick James E Moody David Oyler Amy Pugliano David W Reese Robert Schmitt Suchita V Srinavasan

Dan & Arlene Stadler Mary Ann Stoessel

BENEFACTORS

Larry & Donna Barger Jon W. Erdner Amy Harkins Steven R. Seaman Mark J. Smith Karl Waldner

LEADER'S CIRCLE

Waste Management Kathy Grant Andrew & Janice Poole Mark Schnurer

Membership Chairman - Jerry Agin

Cecil Police Patrolling the Trail

In addition to commemorating two new bulletin boards and a memorial garden in memory of long-time trail supporter Don Berty, Cecil has been the site for much activity of late on the Trail.

Recently, Cecil Township joined the ranks of other communities along the Montour Trail, placing uniformed officers on bicycles to patrol the trail. On any given day, Sgt. Tom Weaver or Officers Keith Strain and Brian Douglas may be seen pedaling a bicycle on the Trail. They will be allowed to patrol the trail when they have three officers on duty. According to Sgt. Dennis Berty, they have already cited several dirt bikes and quad riders and have confiscated some bikes, as well.

In addition, Trail users on the east end of the Cecil Section near Hendersonville will note that the slate dump has been graded down to make way for the expansion of the park at Hendersonville. Plans are for an off-street parking area and soccer field to occupy the site. Hopefully, the removal of the slate dump, in addition to the bike patrol presence, will chase away the quads and dirt bikes who were using it as their playground and traveling on the trail to get there.

Dennis Sims

Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

I	I want to spread the word. Please send me additional flyers.					
;[]	I have written my Legislator and County Commissioners asking them to support the trail.					
įO	My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.					
10	I know a group interested in a presentation.					
la	STUDENT / SENIORS	\$15				
lo	INDIVIDUAL	\$25				
¦O	FAMILY	\$35				
10	SUPPORTING	\$50				
la	SUSTAINING	\$100				
I prop	BENEFACTOR	\$250				

I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council.

(Membership is tax deductible)

I wish to make an additional tax deductible contribution of \$ to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality.

(Make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)

NAME

ADDRESS

LEADERS CIRCLE

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE (daytime)

(evening)

\$500 + up

E-MAIL

By applying for membership in the Montour Trail Council, I indicate my support of its goals.

SIGNATURE

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling tollfree, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does no imply endorsement.

Please fill out this application and return it with your check to:

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

P.O. BOX 11866

PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

DON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice option #3308,or Combined Federal Campaign Contributor Choice option #9308, where you work.

Second Annual Burgh Run a Success Despite Rain

Rain-What's a little rain?...or even a lot of it...when you're determined to have a successful Montour Trail fundraiser? Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub of Bridgeville took it all "in stride" on April 21 with the happening of the "Second Annual 10K Run and One-Mile Walk for family, friends & fun."

There is no doubt- the weather was terrible- but the runners and walkers had their Sunday in the Park that day, and The Montour Trail will be close to \$12,000 better-off as a result of their efforts. While we are awaiting the final figures on a few bills and do not have net donation numbers available just yet, the finances are interesting: almost \$12,000 in sponsorships, an additional \$5,000 in "in-kind" contributions (food, beverages, services) and a new feature that speaks to the fun of the event. Burgh's posted a 3'x6' panel on their wall and customers bought \$800 worth of nametags on it. None of this would happen if it were not for the dedication of Burgh owners Dan, Frank and Tom Daily and the rapport they have with their customers and suppliers. Let's not forget their parents Frank and Jean either, who are always on hand and working hard. It is a family affair!

In addition, 10th graders from Canon-McMillan helped capture the spirit of the day by staffing the water stations as a part of their school's community service program.

The "day" condenses to a three-hour event, but is preceded by months of dedicated volunteer work- enlisting sponsors, grooming and upgrading the trail with a brand-new bed, arranging timing service, water stations, lighting the curved 600' National Tunnel, a disc jockey back at Cecil Park to keep you pumped and many, many other quality features we tend to take for granted but surely would miss if organizers left them out.

The race itself was excellent: Dan Lester won for the men in 32:15" and Sabin Kane for the women in 41:28". 300 runners registered and there were 95 walkers for the 1-Mile leg. Burgh sponsors were hoping for more last-minute registrations, but the rain and 46 degree day held them in check. (Commemorative running shorts are available at specially discounted prices!)

We cannot emphasize the importance of these fund-raisers too much. The Montour Trail Council (MTC) will be advertising for bids in June to refurbish the McDonald Trestle and complete the trail to the Route 980 & 50 intersection. This project's construction costs alone will be \$1,700,000 and the MTC will be undertaking still others. Much of this money comes to us from Federal grants, to be sure, but many other expenses must be met that restricted grant dollars will not pay for. Therein comes the need for organized events and personal contributions. As our Trail map puts it so well: "Be a They"- volunteer and help us get the job done!

Your Trail Board says "many thanks" to all who made this such an outstanding fun day. Be sure to set your calendar for April 20, 2003, for the 3rd Annual "Burgh's Pizza & Wing Pub 10K Run and One-Mile Walk for Family, Friends and Fun."

John Hooton

Montour Trail Benefits from FITness, continued

(Continued from page 3)

fill the calendar. The 2002 weekend schedule is already full through November. Indoor projects such as painting are scheduled during the colder months.

FITS is directed by Dr. Barrie Wight, who came to the program after 25 years in higher education administration. Day-to-day scheduling and coordination are performed by Gregg Thomas, retired City of Washington Chief of Police. The weekend work parties are supervised by Scott Dever, a full-time Washington County Community Services employee. Dever's weekend duties run the gamut of everything from assigning and overseeing the workers, to servicing the tools and equipment, to driving the school bus used to transport the clients. He is assisted on the weekends by Tom Shrum, a Fayette County Children and Youth Services case worker, Joel Guthrie, who hopes for a career as a police officer, Chris Hawk, a teacher and counselor at Pressley Ridge, and Bob Kepics, a Monongahela City councilman, who has just replaced Foreman Hawk. While these individuals carefully monitor the clients' labors, placing strong emphasis on worker safety, it's not unusual to see them pitching in to work alongside the individuals in their charge.

Every Saturday and Sunday for four weeks these men and women showed up on the Montour Trail in their own school bus,

Montour Trail Construction Update

The Montour Trail Council is working to fill in multiple gaps in their trail network between Clairton and Coraopolis.

Construction that started last year to construct trail from Route 837 in Clairton to near Route 51 in Large will be completed this year. This segment will be about two and a half miles long.

The engineering design for remaining trail in South Park Township also has been progressing. For this work, the Montour Trail Council has contracted with A & A Consultants. Emphasis has been placed on completing the design of two trail segments: The first segment will connect Pleasant Street in South Park to the Peters Township line, including installing a concrete deck on the 500 foot long trestle over Route 88. The second segment will extend eastward about a half mile from near Triphammer Road.

On May 28, construction got underway on a three-quarter mile section of trail that will link the Montour Trail Bethel Park Spur to the Arrowhead Trail at Brush Run Road in Peters Township. When work is completed later this year, there will be almost seven miles of continuous trail for bicyclists and pedestrians there. Much of this effort will involve adding fill near Brush Run Road to reduce the slope of the trail.

The Montour Trail Council previously hired Mackin Engineering to design all remaining un-built "mainline" trail in Washington County. This design work is nearly complete, and funding has been secured to build all but a two miles of the trail that Mackin has designed. Construction may begin as soon as the fall of 2002.

On April 12, the Council celebrated the opening of a 2.6-mile trail segment in Findlay Township in Allegheny County and Robinson Township of Washington County. This completed an 18-mile segment between Coraopolis and McDonald. Before completion of this missing link, the 11-mile segment from Coraopolis to Moon was seeing 1000 trail users per day on most summer Saturdays and Sundays.

The Montour Trail Council is an all-volunteer organization that is overseeing development of 48 miles of "mainline" trail between Coraopolis and Clairton and of numerous spur trails in between. They receive funding from dues paid by their 800 members, from local foundations, from the Allegheny County Regional Asset District, from DCNR and Keystone Grants from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and from ISTEA and TEA-21 funds from the Federal Government.

The Trail Council is always looking for volunteers to help out. Trail Council activists have a wide variety of skills similar to a medium sized business. There are engineers, fundraisers, work party organizers, manual laborers, groundskeepers, attorneys, and marketing people.

Information about the Montour Trail Council can be found at www.montourtrail.org, at www.atatrail.org, and by calling 412-831-2030. For information about the Montour Trail in South Park or to volunteer in the South Park area, send email to Paul McKeown at mckeownp@libcom.com or call him at 412-835-6692.

Paul McKeown

Editor's note: This article previously appeared in Park News of South Park Township

Montour Trail Benefits from FITness, continued

(Continued from page 6)

accompanied by a van and trailer carrying the necessary tools and equipment for the job – chain saws, pole pruners, brush cutters, fuel, and safety equipment. Ten to 15 workers arrived each Saturday and more than 30 workers were on hand on Sundays. any of the clients work regular jobs on Saturdays and are only available for FITS duty on Sundays. Their efforts cleared a 20 foot right-of-way for over four miles of overgrown trail of everything from trees to the nefarious multiflora rose. In addition, they removed several hundred railroad ties from the drainage swales along approximately a mile of the trail.

Thanks to the efforts of Washington County, the personnel of the FITS program, and the FITS clients who provided over 1000 man-hours of volunteer time to the project, the Montour Trail Council is one step closer to realizing its goal of 47 miles of continuous trail.

John Warco



MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL P.O. BOX 11866 PITTSBURGH PA 15228-0866

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Volunteer Opportunities

The MTC needs help in improving the organization of our files. We believe this to be a two-step process. The first step is to physically organize the files and create a labeling scheme. The second step is to create a computer based spreadsheet, so the entire MTC Board could easily find documents. If you would like to help us out or have some ideas to share, please give Dennis Pfeiffer a call at 412-262-3748 (Home) or 412-762-4857 (Office).

A volunteer is needed to help issue letters of acknowledgement to our donors. The tasks are limited to signing, folding, stuffing, sealing, and stamping; all of the printed letters, envelopes, and address labels are furnished. Please call Jerry Agin at 412-343-1425 if you can help.

