# ROBINSON TWP. HIGHWAY PLAN **CONCERNS AREA RESIDENTS**

By Dick Quasey

In mid-December highway plans of the Commissioners of Robinson Township (Allegheny County) were reported in local newspapers. One project proposed was a "northern connector" 4-lane road between I-79 tour Valley Watershed or "all-of-the-PA Rt. 51 (Groveton) which would follow the natural valley along Montour Run." This startling news prompted many anxious remarks and questions among Trail users and supporters.

To obtain more specific information and publicly address the issue, Dick Quasey, newly elected President of The Montour Trail (MTC) urged Trail supporters, especially those most familiar with this section of the Trail, e.g. Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail, to attend the earliest public meeting. January 5. 1998.

This (meeting) was a hearing on an application by Robinson Peripheral Developers for tax abatement

under the L.E.R.T.A. Act (Local Eco- along it. nomic Revitalization Tax Assistance). Nine persons addressed the the potential threat of future highway L.E.R.T.A. issue, or alleged threats to the Trail, Montour Run, the Monabove."



Dick Quasey used this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Montour Trail Council, its members and many supporters. Citing the legal status of the MTC, he stated its purpose and responsibilities, namely, the construction and protection of the Trail itself and preservation and protection of the natural resources

Concern was expressed about and general commercial development along the Trail. A plan showing the area covered by the L.E.R.T.A. application was used as an example to justify these con-

In conclusion, Quasey requested opportunities for MTC to become informed about development plans, both public and private, in order to detect early in the planning process what might adversely affect the Trail and its natural surroundings.

Since then, a dialogue has been established by MTC representatives with municipal officials and Robinson Peripheral Developers managers aimed at sharing mutual concerns and objectives and resolving potential conflicts.



IKEA TREE SALE

SOMERSET LANDS \$2 MILLION **PANHANDLE** TRAIL **PROGRESS** 

TRAIL-SIDE **BURN IN IMPERIAL** 

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#### MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER is published bimonthly January through December. All correspondence should be addressed to:

> MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER 33 STERLING DRIVE **CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108**

Or E-mail to: debho@juno.com

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

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Deborah Hoerster

Circulation

Manager

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# Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

With Spring fast approaching, our new MTC President, Dick Quasey, finds himself quite busy with a diversity of Trail matters, one of which he addresses later on in this issue. There is a de facto statewide moratorium on PUC bridge proceedings, permits being sought by Amerikol to mine coal on and near MTC property in the vicinity of RT. US 22, and with new Trail construction in Bethel Park and South Park, daily contacts with contractors, utility and municipal officials are almost routine. These are just a few of the many items clamoring for attention.

As important as these items are, my springtime thoughts usually consist of "spring-cleaning", getting the yard ready for early blooms, and most importantly, deciding which new trail to try first.



I urge you to visit as many of the completed segments of the Trail as you can. A great supply of updated Trail maps are available in boxes along the Trail or from board members. Don't hesitate to pick one up. Also, take this newsletter to work, or share it with your neighbor. Never throw it away - it could mean the loss of a prospective member.

Support is crucial for the Trail's completion. Get out there and spread the word. Better yet, as my son, Doug, always says, "C'mon-tour the Trail!"

Debby





THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER welcomes all questions and comments. Please send all correspondence to the address on the left.

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.

# Calendar of Events

- MTC Board Meeting, every third Monday of the month at Chartiers Valley High School, in the faculty lounge. Turn left off of the-Kirwan Heights exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go under the Interstate, and the school is on your left. Call Dick at 859-6864 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- Cecil Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, at 7:30 pm. Call 221-6406 for more information.
- Work & Clean-up party, Cecil segment, every third Saturday of the month 9:00 am. Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 221-6406 for more information.
- Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail meeting, every Thursday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 pm., at the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Clever Rd. in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 859-3020 for more information.
- Work & Clean-up party, Moon/Robinson segment, every second Saturday of the month 9:00 am. Meet at North Star Petroleum (formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 262-3748 for more information.
- Findlay/North Fayette Friends of the Trail, call Don at 899-3695 or Pete at 788-4136 for more information.
- Work & Clean-up party, Findlay/North Fayette segment, every fourth Saturday of the month 9:00 am. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 788-4136 for more information.
- Bethel Park 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 various committe meetings (such as fundraising) contact Peter Kohnke at 854-1835 for more information.
- Work & Clean-up party, Bethel Park segment, every second and fourth Saturday of the month 8:30 am. Call Peter Kohnke at 854-1835 for location and information.

### IKEA TREE SALE

by Judy Thompson, Tree Sale Coordinator

More than 65 hearty volunteers braved the blus- Trail more than \$2500. Thanks tery, snowy, cold weather of the first weekend in December to raise funds for the Trail. IKEA sold recyclable trees from its parking lot from Thursday December 4th through Sunday December 7th. Trail volunteers used IKEA's clever tree wrapping gadget to wrap more than 800 balsam pines, Douglas firs and frasier firs for IKEA tree customers who paid \$3 per wrap for the convenience. The wider the tree the more human force it took to get it through the wrapper. Some trees demanded two pushers, and two pullers for a successful wrap. For their efforts, volunteers received a free tree, a hot dog and hot chocolate, and the joy of benefiting the Trail.

The wrapping work of the volunteers netted the

to all the Trail supporters who put up with cold feet and ears to man the three-hour shifts, and special thanks to the day chairmen who spent up to 11 hours out in the cold supervising the crews-- Pete Merther, John Hooton, and Don Berty. Christine Bock, coordinator of the



volunteer telephone network did a great job recruiting, and working along with her two young daughters at the Tree Sale as well. Thanks also to John Wasco, Montour High School teacher, who enlisted an ambitious group of students.

# ... and the PREZ sez...

In addition to completing the Trail, the Montour Tail Council also has the responsibility to promote the protection and preservation of the Trail and the natural resources along it. These are significant responsibilities.

Nearly 50% of the Trail is complete and used by the public everyday. The remainder includes 11 costly construction projects which are continuous attention too. in various stages of development. Hopefully, several of these projects will be completed this year, the rest

before 2001.

Just as important (and never ending ) is the protection and preservation not only of the Trail itself, but also adjacent natural resources (i.e. streams, wet lands, greenspace, historical sites, etc.). Recent events (see news article, page 1) are a reminder that these matters deserve

Members of the Montour Trail Council and other supporters can assist by informing the MTC Board of

planning and development activities in communities adjoining the Trail which might have an adverse impact on it now or in the future. That will help the Board address such situations early-on and improve the chances of avoiding problems and conflicts. Otherwise the completion of the Trail, its use and the benefits that result for individuals and communities alike could be compromised.







Visit the Montour Trail web-site at: http://trfn.clpgh.org/orgs/mtc/

## Somerset lands \$2 million for Four Rec trail **PROJECTS**

Somerset County has obtained \$2 million for 1998 upgrades to the Allegheny Highlands Trail, with as many as four separate projects under way simultaneously.

The 2,000-foot Salisbury Viaduct, near Meyersdale. will be redecked to accommodate bicyclists and other trail users. A new 2.7-mile trail section, between Garrett and the Salisbury Viaduct, also will be constructed, connecting to the 16-mile trail in Garrett.

The second phase of the Western Maryland Railroad Station project in Meyersdale, which will restore the building to its original condition, also is scheduled for completion in 1998. The building will be used by the Meyersdale Historical Society for headquarters and a museum and will include trail-related commercial space.

Somerset County also received funds to complete a 3.7-mile section between Pinkerton Tunnel and Fort Hill, which could be completed in 1998.

Money was obtained from several sources, including the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancements Program, Pennsylvania Depart- rail trail systems in the United States. ment of Conservation and Natural Resources' Keystone

93 Program and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Her-

reprint courtesy of Johnstown Tribune Democrat 12 26 97 by Jason Green

itage Preservation Commission.

In addition, an agreement on a tract of land that will allow further construction of the Allegheny Highlands trail has been reached.

In the deal, George J. Brodmerkel Jr., of Pittsburgh and Fort Hill, will give Somerset County a 30-foot right of way for an approximately one-mile easement through his property for the purpose of constructing and maintaining the hiking and biking trail, Somerset County Commissioner Brad Cober announced.

The tract of land will allow the trail to be completed from the Pinkerton Bridge to Confluence, where it then will connect with the Youghiogheny River Trail and continue to Ohiopyle and points west.

The Allegheny Highlands Trail is part of the more than 200-mile Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C., trail which is expected to be completed in 2005.

When finished, the system will be one of the premier

### WELCOME **NEW MEMBERS**

#### Membership Chairman

- Alan Agle
- Carl & Sheila Arendt
- D L Ashliman
- Stanton W. Bockoven, Jr
- R. Stephen R. Campbell
- Joseph Derouin
- Mr & Mrs Jim Emanuel
- Mrs. Leslie S. Engelmeir
- Ms. E. Ann Fusco
- Patricia Garrett
- Michael J. Gates
- Fred Gilkey & Evelyn Bradley
- James P. Hannan
- Amy Hildabidle
- Sr. Kathy Hoerster
- George & Lisa Jones
- The Keany family
- Frank Kratz, Jr
- Mr. Edwin F. Kuna
  - Mackin Engineering Co.
- Jennifer Maxwell

#### Jerry Agin

- Tom & Molly Maxwell
- Anne & Donald McGowan
- Maureen A. McMahon
- John Murphy, Jr
- Tom & Linda Prezel
- Mary Ann Scott
- Jeffrey Small
- Ted & Lois Sturm
- Lee Tosh
- Theodore B. Treadway

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

#### **BENEFACTORS:**

Mr. Edwin F. Kuna Kurt J. Lesker Co., John A. Ross John Murphy, Jr

John & Sandy Newman Stan Sattinger Roy Well & Mary Shaw Lou Steinmiller Judy & Tom Thompson E. Steven White

John & Eva McLeister

Thank You!

Mark J Smith

#### 1997 Supporters who gave \$50 or more:

Mr & Mrs Thomas W Golightly

Montour Robinson AARP Linda Acheson & Hank Pool Jerry Agin Alan Agle Allegheny Valley School Neal Altman Larry & Ann Arch William L Atkinson Stephen Ayer & Pat Quolke Tim Baker Joe Barron Douglas S Beck Drs J G Benitez & L G Allison E. Peter Benzing Jan Beresford Sam Bertenthal & Anne Humphreys Gregory A Brzozowski and Juliann C. Brzozowski Mrs. Karen E. Bywalski R Stephen R Campbell Warren M. Cella ChemCentral/Pittsburgh Annette Ciotti Jean Condo Carolyn & Bob Cusick Gloria J & John A Dagall Jr Doug & Jane Damico Danver family Tom & Sara Dougherty David Eibling Explorers Club of Pittsburgh Mr & Mrs Sigo Falk Will & Dorothy Farrell Marshall Fausold Thomas and Judy Ferenc J V and Alan Fleckstein Joan K Fox Connor, Joanne, Tyler, & Eli Fox Bob Gambone The Garden Club of Allegheny ant Oaks Garden Club William P. Gillespie, Pittsburgh Valve & Fitting Co

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Charles S. Smithers H Snyder Steel Corp Gwen & Jeff Steigerwalt Lou Steinmiller Frank & Elizabeth Suatoni, Jr John and Janet Swanson Robert Taranto Donald R & M Eileen Teyssier Debora B Thompson Judy & Tom Thompson I hornburg Community Club Sam Tischler Total Equipment Company Norman Tournay Mr & Mrs J Trask Andrew & Ming Tung Walden Woods Community Art & Lois Walters Thomas R Warren Joyce Waslosky Barry Watkinson Helen Weaver Ted Weidner Roy Weil & Mary Shaw Jay R Wells III West Hills Area Women's Club E Steven White Jo Wilson Woman's Club of Upper St Clair Stuart Young Claude Zajac



# Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

	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.	
l-d	My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.	
	I know a group interested in a presentation.	
	I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council.	
	STUDENT	\$5
	INDIVIDUAL	\$15
	FAMILY	\$25
	ORGANIZATION	\$50
	SUPPORTING	\$50

(Membership is tax deductible)

I wish to make an additional tax deducible contribution to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality

\$100

\$250 + up

(Make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)

**ADDRESS** 

SUSTAINING

BENEFACTOR

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE (day time)

(evening)

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 not 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** 

BON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice option #3308 where you work.

### FUTURE OF RR BRIDGES IN WASH. CO. LOOKING BRIGHTER

by Bruce Barro

There are hopeful signs that the long battle to preserve the old railroad bridge structures along the Montour Trail in Washington County may be nearing a successful conclusion.

The future of several key bridges looked bleak six months ago, until an administrative law judge ordered the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission to reconsider its demolition orders. The PUC then adopted an 18-month moratorium on bridge proceedings, giving state and county agencies and the MTC time to work arrangements for preserving the structures.

, representatives met with a group of Washingunty Commissioners and county department 1 September, asking the county to ensure protecf the bridges by accepting secondary responsibil-

ity for their maintenance. The county's risk would be minimal, since it would become responsible for the bridges only if the



MTC exhausted its own resources. However, to further shield the county from exposure in case of a serious bridge collapse, the MTC is attempting to work out details of an insurance policy.

Like so many of the challenges to trail construction, this one is a complex process-but greatly preferable to the cost of constructing new bridges or at-grade crossings. The MTC hopes to achieve a final agreement by spring; in the meantime, letters to the Washington County Commissioners encouraging their continued cooperation with the MTC are always appropriate.

### ANHANDLE TRAIL PROGRESS

by Dave Wright

Track and ballast were recently emoved from Conrail's former Panhandle Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad between Walkers Mill. just west of Carnegie, through Oakdale, McDonald, Primrose, Midway and Burgettstown to Weirton, West Virginia. This provides a new 27.4 mile and Company. The appraisal rail-trail opportunity. The Montour Trail Council pledged to develop the 10.4 mile portion between Walkers Mill and Midway. The Montour Trail connects with the Panhandle at Primrose near the Robinson Township Building.

The National Pike Trail Council, with Conrail's consent successfully secured a 6 month railbank status extension by the Federal Surface-Transportation Commission. The Harmon Creek Trail Association secured support from the Weirton Park bridges over roads. Two are in Mid-Board and the West Virginia Rail Authority to develop the trail between Weirton and the State Line.

John Foley of Conrail plans to donate the entire 27.4 - mile right-ofway, without cost, if governmental

agencies offer to take over the bridges spanning roads. Washington County, Harmon Creek Trail Association and the Montour Trail Council each contributed its share of Natural Resources agreed to investhe cost for a real estate appraisal, recently completed by Dan McCown shows the value of such an offer.

The Allegheny County Board of Commissioners agreed to accept a Conrail donation without hesitation because no bridges cross roads in Allegheny County. The West Virginia Rail Authority is willing to take over its bridges.

With enthusiastic support from Andy Baechle, Washington County Parks and Recreation Director, Washington County is investigating taking over seven former railroad way Borough, three in Smith Township, the Route 18 crossing is in Burgettstown and the Hanlin Station bridge is in Jefferson Township. Montour Tail Council also requested Washington County to take over 14

Montour Trail bridges over roads.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and tigate traffic sight distances and clearances to determine whether each bridge proposed for trail use should be removed or retained. The field meeting occurred several months ago for bridges over Route 18 and at Hanlin Station. In order to allow sufficient time for such a process, the Pennsylvania Public Utility recently ordered an 18 month bridge moratorium.

Collier Township, South Fayette Township, Oakdale Borough, Mc-Donald Borough, Hanover Township, the City of Weirton, Brooke County Commission and the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Allegheny County Board of Commissioners have all passed resolutions or written letters of support for the project. We seek additional letters of support.

### 60 YR. OLD BUILDING IN IMPERIAL REDUCED TO ASH

by John Peter Merther

It was a landmark in the Imperial area for over 60 years, but it took only a couple of hours to turn it into ashes. "It" was a building at the Five Point intersection near mile marker 8 of the Montour Trail. Years of abandonment, vandalism, and its hazardous condition with problems too costly to repair, left Mr. John Gillespie, owner, no option but to have it destroyed.

Sadly, Mr. Gillespie stated that the building boasts of some very old methods of construction, e.g. tongue and groove construction of the walls, mortissed floor joists, etc. that are not used today.

On Sunday, December 14, 1997, the North Fayette Township Volumteer Fire Department was at the location to do a controlled burn of the building. The fire was witnessed by a few area residents. Dick Quasey and Stan Siranovich, board members of the Montour Trail Council, also attented due to its close proximity to the Trail.



Picture shows close proximity of Trail to the building being burned.

### WANT-ADS

# HELP WANTED

#### Needed:

Volunteers to help secure agency assistance and raise funds for a Montour Valley Alliance project to measure stream flows in Montour Run.

Call Stan Sattinger at 412-256-1327.

Due to an ever-growing list of volunteers for Trail work, there is a desperate need for help on the **Phone Chain**.

The **Phone Chain** helps spread the word to the volunteers and inform them of what is happening, so that they can be where they are needed. You can help from home, make your own schedule, learn the latest developments and watch the Trail continue to grow knowing that you are a part of it.

If interested, please call Christine Bock at 412-833-0869 for more information.



#### **Newsletter Deadline**

All articles for the May/June Trail-Letter will be due **no later than** April 1, 1998.
Please see Page 2 for submitting correspondence.
Thank you.

### Don Anthony

The Montour Trail-Letter is sad to report the death of Donald Anthony of Carnegie, MTC member and pioneer trail-blazer, on February 1, 1998



Don was a long-time employee of US Airways and is survived by his wife, June, children Sherry and Mark, and a brother, Richard.

He will be greatly missed by many, including his fellow volunteers in the building of the Cecil section of the Montour Trail.

# CUPOLA BUCKS \$

While riding her bike on the Montour Trail, Susan Eger passed the gazebo at the Park Manor Boulevard intersection (approx. mile 4.5) She noticed several people working there and stopped to talk to them. It was then that she learned of the need for funds to build a cupola for the top of the gazebo.

Susan, an avid Trail user, offered \$75.00 to be donated in the names of Dr. & Mrs. Mark W. Eger and Dr. Noah M. Eger. The Doctors are optometrists, located at 1331 State Avenue, Coraopolis, PA 15108.

This couldn't have come at a better time, now that the gazebo is near completion. First, however, plans have to be drawn for the perfect cupola before construction can begin. It's a lot of work, and we have some very dedicated people ready to do the job. However, anyone willing to help with the project is most welcome. Just call one of the Moon/Rob Friends of the Trail.

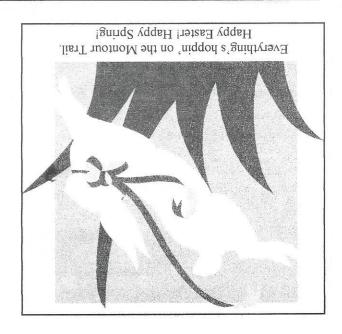
On behalf of the MTC, please accept our heartfelt gratitude for your very generous gift. If it wasn't for the generosity of many people, donating their time as well as money, our Trail would still be just a thought.

# Stock Donations

by Marshall Fausold

The Montour Trail Council recently received a gift of stock from a member. This is a new (for us) possibility now available to any benefactor who may wish to take advantage of a tax write-off by donating stock which has appreciated in value. The donor will get the full value of the stock as a charitable donation and save the capital gains tax as well. Help yourself and help your Trail at the same time! Contact any MTC officer for details.





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