



# MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 10 Issue 2

Mar/Apr 1999

## Trail Tip o' the Month

- It's not worth risking a sprain or a break to work out on an icy Trail. Please remember also that ice can form on bridges when there is none on the Trail.

## Mantra of the Month

- A thing of beauty is a joy forever:  
Its loveliness increases;  
it will never  
Pass into nothingness;  
but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us,....

John Keats

## Inside this issue:

MTC 1998 Summary	4
Watershed Finalization	6
Membership Renewal	6
Washington Bridges	8
Construction for 1999	4A
Char-Val on Bethel Trail	4B
Moon Twp. Bicycle Patrol	4B

## THE ATA "WORLD-WIDE" CONFERENCE

By Marshall Fausold

The members of the trail groups which form the Allegheny Trail Alliance met at St. Joseph's Center near Greensburg on January 29-30 to review a year of phenomenal progress, to discuss strategy for the year ahead, and to enjoy fellowship with each other on one of the few occasions when we all come together. Over one hundred fifteen persons attended, representing all of the trails in the Alliance, State and Federal agencies, and some non-ATA trails. Prior to the official opening, the ATA Board held its regular meeting. This was also attended by about twenty early arrivals, who listened attentively to

status reports on TEA-21 and Pennsylvania funding, progress of various segments, and plans for the June '99 International Conference in Pittsburgh.

First conference event was the Friday evening meal, followed by opening welcome by ATA President Linda Boxx. Featured speaker was Rick Sebak, well-known producer of documentaries for WQED, who described the challenges of creating his widely acclaimed features. Rick's talk was followed by several hours of unstructured fellowship while entertainment was provided by the Rail-Trail Ramblers (a lively folk

music group including MTC's own Bill Metzger).

Saturday's breakfast was followed by a general session to inform the ATA members of the opportunity to have the entire ATA trail designated as one of the trails in the National Trail System. Panel members included representatives from the PA Bureau of Parks and the National Park Service. It was noted that the trail from Washington DC to Ohiopyle is already designated as the Potomac Heritage Path. Attendees were urged to initiate discussion within their respective trail groups about the issue.

Continued on page 7

## And the survey says...

Jack Swisher

In July, 1997 the MTC conducted an extensive survey of trail users. Our goal was to find out who was using the Trail, how often they used it, why they used it, and what they did and didn't like about it. We wanted this information for several reasons. First, by understanding the Trail's con-

stituency we will be able to better manage the future Trail development. Second, we needed to provide these demographics to public and private agencies who fund the Trail. These agencies want to know that their money is being put to good use and that the Trail is being used by the

general public.

First of all we developed a questionnaire that captured the information we needed. We had volunteers stationed at strategic points along the trail in the Moon, Robinson, and Findlay areas.

Continued on page 4A





### MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dick Quasey	President
Dennis Pfeiffer	Vice President
Bruce Barron	Secretary
Judy Thompson	Treasurer
Don Bert	
Marshall Fausold	
John Hooton	
Deborah Hoerster	
Stan Sattinger	
Paul McKeown	
Bob Boyce	
Ford Shankle	
Peter Kohnke	
Frank Keppel	
Pete Merther	
Stan Siranovich	

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER is published bi-monthly 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

All other trail correspondence should be addressed:

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

### MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL PHONE NUMBERS:

For information: 412-831-2030  
For administration and business: 412-257-2328

Newsletter  
Editor

Deborah Hoerster

Circulation  
Manager

Joan Schweiger

## Trail Talk

*from the Editor's Desk*

One of the most interesting aspects of putting this newsletter together is the feedback from **YOU**, the readers. Whether from snail-mail or e-mail, information and problems concerning the Trail, comments on articles, and tidbits of interest are always forthcoming and well appreciated. Questions from you regarding Trail status and future Trail development has prompted the MTC to find a solution for disbursing this kind of information in a relative way, via the Trail-Letter.

Because of this we now have a new "regularly appearing" column entitled, "Board Briefs." This column will encapsulate the minutes from the MTC Board meetings, enabling all to better understand what's being done now, and what's coming in the future. Our MTC secretary, Bruce Barron, has graciously taken on this task, for which we are truly grateful.

Please continue to send in your comments, views, notes of interest, etc., as this is what we need to keep our Trail-Letter interesting as well as informative. Remember, **YOU** are the key!

*Debby*

PS: MTC is celebrating it's 10th birthday all year! Watch for upcoming anniversary events listed in the Trail-Letter or area newspapers.



### Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the May/June Trail-Letter will be due **no later than**

April 1, 1999.

Please see Page 2 for submitting correspondence.

Thank you.

### Comments/News

Your opinion means a lot to us. Send your Comments or news info. to:  
Montour Trail-Letter  
33 Sterling Dr.  
Coraopolis, PA 15108  
Or e-mail to:  
debho@juno.com

Thanks!

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.

**March 1999**

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					

**Calendar of Events****April 1999**

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

- \* Special meeting of the Cecil Friends of the Trail will be held on **March 2, 1999** at Cecil American Legion at **7:30 p.m.** to promote new membership and to kick-off the extension of the Cecil Trail to Rt. 980. All are invited to attend. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call 412 257-2553.
- \* Easter Sunday – **April 4.**
- \* Penny Day on the Moon/Rob. Trail section – **May 8.**
- \* National Trail Day – **June 5, 1999.**
- \* Montour Trail/IKEA 1/2 Marathon – **September 11.**
- \* The 1999 International Trails & Greenway Conference to be held in **Pittsburgh on June 23 – 25, 1999.**

**Friends' Meetings and Work Parties**

- ◆ **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 412- 859-6864 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ◆ **Cecil Events:**
  - Friends of the Trail meeting**, every first Tuesday of the month - at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, at 7:30 pm. 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**, 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 412-859-3020 for more information.
  - Work & Clean-up party**, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at North Star Petroleum (formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 412-262-3748 for more information.
- ◆ **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 various committee meetings (such as fundraising) 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 Events:**
  - Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party**, last Saturday of every month. For more information call Dr. Joe Rudolph at 412-653-4900.
- ◆ **MacDonald Events:**
  - Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party**, tentatively held on the first Saturday of every month. For more information, contact Ray Johnston at 724-356-2621.



# ...and the PREZ sez...

by Dick Quasey

## MTC 1998 Summary

New trail construction consisted of one (1) mile in South Park Township, another mile in Bethel Park and the Trail Head at Triphammer Road. The forecast for construction in 1999 appears elsewhere in this issue. Numerous significant events occurred also which are essential for engineering and construction to proceed this year and next.

Most significant was the campaign to gain funds from the Federal Government which resulted in a line-item for same in the Federal Transportation Act (TEA-21) passed by Congress in June. Now, although matching funds will be required and certain criterion must be compiled with, the prospect for actually obtaining these funds is real and an encouraging timetable is set. (Goal - Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C. in 2001.) This was accomplished by substantial effort of some MTC volunteers and support and cooperation of the Allegheny Trail Alliance.



Simply put, \$3 million in Federal money will be available to meet the major construction challenges facing MTC. These funds coupled with those still available under the ISTE program go a long way toward completing the Montour Trail in both Allegheny and Washington Counties.

To facilitate all this, PADOT has agreed that all ISTE funds will be applied to projects in Allegheny County and administered by PADOT District 11 (Bridgeville). TEA-21 funds will be handled through PADOT District 12 (Uniontown).

This is intended to simplify and expedite all MTC projects.



A similar campaign on the State level, actually preceded the TEA-21 campaign, and it resulted in \$2 million being included in the 1999 State budget for trail development, a large part of which MTC is eligible to apply for.

Recalling that the Public Utility Commission (PUC) nearly 2 years ago ordered the removal of all highway crossing structures abandoned by railroad companies and that the MTC obtained a "stay" on that order until June of 1999 in order to prepare an argument for a decision more favorable to MTC's interests, a proposal has been drafted by MTC which incorporates the interests in this matter of PADOT, DCNR and the counties and municipalities involved. All interested parties are in the process now of "signing-off" on this proposal (mostly the product of MTC's attorney, Richard Wilson) with the objective of presenting it to the PUC in late March.

As in previous years, MTC and IKEA sponsored a half-marathon. However, MTC switched roles with IKEA, becoming the main conductor of the event, with IKEA remaining an important sponsor. The other usual fund-raising events were also held — the beer-pour at the Allegheny County Rib Cook-Off and the Christmas Tree Wrap. These kind of funds, like membership donations are used to cover administrative and operating expenses. They also provide beneficial publicity.



Heading the special events

of '98 is the coal stripping still underway in the Boggs Run area. Per the agreement entered into with MTC in early 1998, Amerikohl Mining, Inc. commenced the clearing for and the mining of coal in the Pittsburgh seam (which lies under MTC property between Boggs Run Road and US 22) in late October. This work is scheduled for completion in April of 1999 leaving MTC with a proper trail base across the work area and extending into the adjoining Champion property.



Another special event was the installation of two counters — one near mile 4 and the other in the Enlow vicinity near mile 8. Results indicate that between the end of July to the end of October, and average of approximately 2500 persons used the Montour Trail each week in the Park Manor Drive area, and 3200 in the Enlow section. The counts are being studied further.

Another study was conducted to determine the economic impact of Trail activities on adjoining communities, not only MTC but all the ATA members (from Coraopolis to Cumberland, MD). Just finished, the study report reflects well on the Trails program. An executive summary will be distributed soon.

Other newsworthy events include the repair of the Johnston Bridge deck in Mt. Pleasant Township, and the consent decree issued by the Court of Common Pleas, Washington County, affirming MTC's title to property in Cecil.

*For information on Trail construction planned for 1999, see page 9.*



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Membership Chairman

Jerry Agin

John Androsky  
Fred Beighley  
Jack & Barbara Brooks  
Kevin R. Craig  
Steve Eckerson  
Pete Grondziowski  
Richard A. Henker  
William B Leonard  
Douglas McMillen  
Rachel & Ched Mertz  
Walt Navrotsky  
Gary Richter  
Ed Schaffnit  
Ted Sohler  
Edward Sontag

Drew & Lyndia Stauffer  
Bill Visnich  
Janet M. Vogel  
Mark & Janet Weber  
Rudy Westphal & Family

*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.*

## BENEFACTORS

Tim Baker  
Richard J. and Karen E. Bywalski  
Bob Gambone  
Judy & Gordon Kemp  
Kurt J. Lesker Co.  
John & Sandy Newman  
Dennis Pfeiffer  
Andrew & Janice Poole  
Lou Steinmiller  
Paul Rankin  
John and Janet Swanson  
Judy & Tom Thompson  
Roy Weil & Mary Shaw

**Thank You!**

### Stock Donations

Any benefactor who may wish to take advantage of a tax write-off by donating stock, which has appreciated in value, to the Mon-

tour Trail Council may now do so. The donor will get full value of the stock as a charitable donation and save the capital gains tax as well. Contact any MTC officer for details.

### IKEA tree sale

*By Judy Thompson*

Once again a hearty, strong group of volunteers helped at the IKEA Christmas tree sale to earn funds for the Montour Trail.

Although this year's weather was more like September than December, more than 50 volunteers gave valuable December hours to help customers find the right tree and then to have it wrapped for \$3, (all proceeds for wrapping going directly to the Trail treasury).

Volunteers earned \$2825 during the four days of the sale. Special thanks to day-captains: Marshall Fausold, John Hooton, Pete Merther and Dave Lewis, and to the Morphy and Bock families, and to all the students from Montour High School who worked.

Remember to volunteer next year. There's a special perk for all volunteers: a free Christmas tree.

## 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.
- ☐ 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/SENIORS** \$15
- ☐ **INDIVIDUAL** \$25
- ☐ **FAMILY** \$35
- ☐ **SUPPORTING** \$50
- ☐ **SUSTAINING** \$100
- ☐ **BENEFACTOR** \$250
- ☐ **LEADERS CIRCLE** \$500 + up

(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 \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (day time) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

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 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

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



# Watershed plan being finalized

*By Stan Sattinger*

A draft version of the River Conservation and Land Use Plan for the Montour Run Watershed was issued for review and comment by Airport-area residents in December. The finalized version of this document will be the main product of the Montour Run Watershed Planning Project, which has been conducted for the Montour Valley Alliance by a team of professional consultants led by KCI Technologies, Inc.

The draft version of the Plan lists a total of 56 actions that can improve protection of the water, land, biological, cultural, recreational, and educational resources of the Watershed. Included are critical reviews of land-use patterns and zoning, as well as actions that would benefit the area's economy through recreation and tourism enhancements.

A scientifically based development capacity plan identifies where development can occur with best protection afforded to the Watershed's environmental resources and popular recreational areas. Protection of the more sensitive areas would ensure the continuation of recreational and economic benefits presently being derived from the Montour Trail and other resources. It would also help reduce future costs for stemming streambank erosion, repairing flood damage to public and private facilities, and removing siltation from streambeds.

The Plan defines a Riparian Conservation Corridor that is particularly vulnerable. This Corridor can be protected by enforcing existing ordinances that relate to tree cover, building coverage, and the disturbance of steep slopes, drainageways, and land-

slide-prone soils. Other means of protection could include the establishment of a Montour Greenway such as the Hollow Oak Land Trust has been advocating for several years. Through conservation easements, sensitive resources can be protected while lands remain in private ownership.

The final version of the Plan will be presented at a public hearing this coming spring. If the Plan is endorsed by one or more of the municipalities within the Watershed and is favorably received by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Montour Run will be placed on the Pennsylvania River Conservation Registry. This will make the 37-square-mile Montour Run Watershed eligible for state funding of implementation projects that should directly benefit all area residents and businesses.

MTC WEB  
ADDRESS



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

## Renew your membership promptly

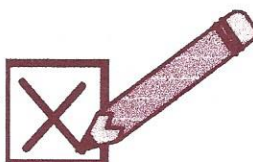
*By Bruce Barron*

Jerry Agin, our superb Membership Chairman, was reviewing recently the list of Montour Trail Council members needing a reminder notice to send in their renewal. To his surprise, the members in danger of "lapsing" included a few of our most faithful, active members.

To help make sure that doesn't happen often, and to get more personal feedback from MTC members, we are initiating a phone follow-up effort this year. Board members and other volunteers will be seeking to

learn more about why people join the MTC and how we can continue to make their membership valuable to them.

Renewals are extremely important to the Montour Trail. Our ability to show a stable or growing membership greatly affects our success in securing government and foundation funds to complete the



trail. And, during 1998, contributions from members accounted for 56 percent of the funds needed for administration and operation expenses.

Happily, nearly 80 percent of our members renew each year. With your help, we hope to increase that percentage in 1999, and bring in 100 new members besides.

Your membership really does make a difference!

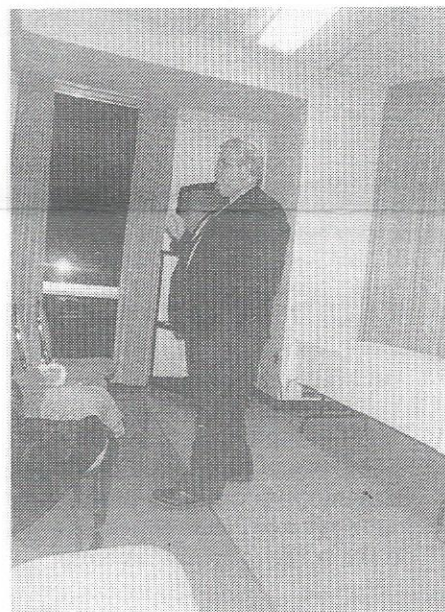
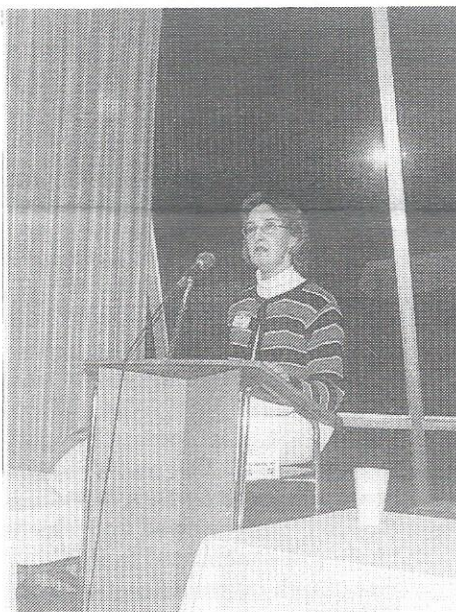


## ATA Conference

*Continued from page 1*

The primary afternoon session featured the presentation of the report *An Economic Impact Study for the Allegheny Trail Alliance*, produced jointly by the Pennsylvania Economy League and the University of Pittsburgh. The report's authors, Drs. Michael Weir and Steve Farber, described their results and explained their methodology. Both felt that their conclusions would greatly strengthen the ATA's (and other trail's) case for public support. Concurrent sessions were also offered in expanding membership base, producing effective newsletters, and using our trails as educational opportunities.

Following these sessions, a concluding general wrap-up session was the occasion for humorous, but clearly sincere, awards from the various Trail Councils and the ATA to individuals who had distinguished themselves in trail service. The ATA's went to Bill (Flash) Metzger and the MTC's went to Dave (Recycle) Wright! Everyone was enthusiastic about the success of the event and left with many points to ponder as well as renewed enthusiasm for our cause. Photos of the conference may be viewed on the MTC's web page (click on "Trail Events" and then on "viewing").



*(Top picture): MTC's representatives during Friday evening's meal at ATA Conference, St. Joseph's Center in Greensburg.*

*(Bottom left): ATA's president, Linda Boxx welcomes the assembly.*

*(Bottom right): Featured speaker, Rick Sebak, producer of documentaries for WQED, tells how they're done.*

Up to the "minute".....

## Board Briefs

Recent actions of interest by the MTC board:

Approved use of a frequently flooded portion of trail in Robinson Township, Allegheny County for an asphalt paving demonstration as part of the International Trails & Greenway Conference in June.

Received a report on the proposed allocation among trail organizations of Allegheny Regional Asset District money granted to the Allegheny Land Trust. The MTC could receive as much as \$30,000 from this fund.

Approved moving forward

with a required environmental assessment on trail sections to be developed in Peters Township.

Discussed trail-building goals for 1999. New trail is to be completed in three areas: Large to Clairton, Boggs Run to Quicksilver, and Cecil Park to Venice.







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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PITTSBURGH PA  
PERMIT NO. 2524



Ellis Asphalt Paving Company placing final surface in Bethel park near Peters Township line. This photo was taken in October, 1998

PAGE 8

## Washington County bridge agreements near

*By Bruce Barron*

The MTC's effort to retain as many as possible of the existing railroad crossings over state maintained highways and roads appears to be on the verge of modest success.

Over the last two years, the MTC has been contesting the state Public Utility Commission's attempts to have all these bridges removed. Since bridge replacement is among the most expensive aspects of trail construction, these removals would create major obstacles to trail development.

As a result of significant effort by MTC's legal counsel, Dick Wilson, the PUC's order was blocked and two state departments — Conservation and Natural Resources, and Transportation — agreed to conduct a reanalysis of

the bridges. Eighteen crossings were involved. The result is a proposal, prepared by Dick Wilson, that is being reviewed and which is likely to be submitted to PUC in late march for consideration and hopefully acceptance. The proposal covers the removal of some structures, the improvement of others and retention of the rest. (See PUC remarks under Prez sez.)

New legislation passed last fall will permit the PUC to transfer responsibility for these bridges to the MTC. To make this transfer feasible, a government entity is needed to take "secondary responsibility" for the bridges in the highly unlikely event that the MTC should become unable to maintain them.

The MTC met with all three Wash-

ington County Commissioners on January 21, and they expressed their strong support for the trail. We are hopeful that, in the near future, a formal "secondary responsibility" agreement will be completed and signed.

Many civic leaders deserve our thanks for helping us come this far. They include Washington County Commissioners Bracken Burns, Diana Irely, and Scott Fergus; County planning director Marlene Luketich; and County parks and recreation director Andy Baechle. In addition, DCNR Secretary John Oliver and PennDOT Secretary Brad Mallory have both supported and been personally involved in this precedent-setting negotiation.