



MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 14 Issue 2

March / April 2003

For your consideration

If you think you're too small to make a difference, you haven't been in bed with a mosquito.

Anita Roddick

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MTC Web Address

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

Burgh's Run to offer bigger cash prizes, more fun on April 27th

Run like your life (and The Montour Trail) depends on it. Join in the running of Burgh's 10K Run and help the cause! Cecil Park, in Cecil, PA, is the place as always and Sunday, April 27, is the date. Join us for a fun day. And if you're not a runner or are pushing a stroller, there's always the 2-Mile Fun Walk. Just be there.

The Daily brothers, race sponsors using the name of their restaurant in Bridgeville (Burgh's Pizza & Wing Pub), will repeat again this year with timing, clothing, cash prizes, motivatin', gyratin' music and great food after the event...extras other races don't offer. As if that weren't reason enough to join in, many also see the race as a great warm-up for the Pittsburgh Marathon to be held May 4.

You may recall that last year the race proceeds of \$12,000 completely paid for the 3.5 mile repaving of trail surface from Cecil Park eastward beyond the National Tunnel. That price tag covers only the limestone surface material; the labor cost to install the surface was donated, as was all other race labor.

How can you help with this year's proceeds? One Trail need is to buy a new tractor with an articulating mower arm for surfaces above and below grade. The arm alone can cost \$12,000 to \$15,000. We need a garage to house and repair our vehicles and other

equipment. \$50,000 is a modest cost for such a structure, even with volunteer labor thrown in.

But back to the race event: What makes Burgh's 10K Run financially successful each year is the outstanding support coming from the customers and suppliers of Burgh's restaurant. Corporate and individual sponsors come forward to buy ads from the \$1,500 level grading to \$50 and \$100 amounts. Race fees are a break-even item because of the prizes given.

Speaking of the prizes, all awards have been generously increased this year: The top three male and female finishers will each claim \$300 for 1st, \$200 for 2nd and \$100 for 3rd places. To encourage early sign-up, Burgh brothers Dan, Frank and Tom announced the first 350 Run and the first 100 Walk applicants will be given race shorts in their packets.

A new six-foot long "Patron Board" was well received last year. It announced "Let's Help Build The Montour Trail." Diners came to enjoy the great food and fun atmosphere and while there bought name plates to paste on the Board in \$1 to \$20 amounts (whatever each wanted to contribute). Overall, some \$800 was raised. Wouldn't it be great to double that amount this year?

All in all, Burgh's Pizza & Wing Pub's 3rd Annual 10 K Run for family friends and fun" is shaping up to be a real winner again this year. More information and an online registration is available on the Internet at www.Active.com/event_detail.cfm?-event_id=1041636. Enroll TODAY!

John Hooton



THE MONTOUR TRAIL

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER
304 Hickman Street
Bridgeville, PA 15017
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newsletter@montourtrail.org

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: 412-257-3011
Fax: 412-257-3016

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Newsletter Editor | Astrid Cook |
| Circulation Manager | Joan Schweiger |

Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk



Oh, the weather outside is frightful... but the Trail is still delightful. For those who appreciate the finer attributes of a very white winter, at any rate.

The "blizzard of '03" was not terribly conducive to intense work parties on the Trail, but as MTC President Peter Kohnke points out in his President's Message (see page 7), the work doesn't end when the flakes fly. The Trail construction continues in all kinds of weather. That said, no board member at the February meeting could admit to venturing out the day before when as much as 18 inches of freshly-fallen snow blanketed the Trail.

As for our hundreds of supporters, however, I've no doubt that there are a few Trail users who did manage to don skis or snow shoes (any mushers out there being walked by their huskies?), and I suspect you probably have a winter's tale or two to share. Perhaps you bundled up during the long cold January and took a bone-chilling hike in Arctic air. Or maybe you kept your New Year's resolution by donning a Lycra suit and jogged your way through the snow and ice. Did you attempt to cross country ski in the rapid snowfall of February 16?

Since winters as intense as the one of 2002-2003 are fairly rare in this area, I would love to hear about how our readers took advantage of the winter wonderland along the Trail. Really! Send a paragraph or two recounting your adventures to my attention either by e-mail or to our street address (at left); please include your name and phone number. If you want to send along a photo in your "winter's best," that would be even better. Be sure to note which sections of the Trail you were using. I hope to put together a summary of our readers' wintry missives in an upcoming newsletter.

Possibly, when the weather is sunny with temperatures back up in the 90s and we are sweating the dog days of summer. Then these cold days will be but a distant—and no doubt—refreshing memory. So write your memories down now while they are as fresh as the downy white stuff that has covered the ground for so much of this winter.

In the meantime, dress warmly and enjoy your Trail this winter. Spring will be here before we know it.

Astrid



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

St. Paddy's Day Four Leaf Clover Walk at Southpointe—
Mar. 15

MTC Board Meeting – Mar. 17

MTC Board Meeting – Apr. 21

Burgh's 10K Run and 2-Mile Fun Walk – Apr. 27

March 2003

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| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

April 2003

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| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

Looking Ahead...

Large-to-Clairton Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – May 3

National Trail Day – June 7

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the May / June Trail-Letter
will be due no later than April 1, 2003

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

- ♦ 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 412-835-6692.
- ♦ 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.

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony to be held for New Trail Section

The Montour Trail Council invites the public to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, May 3, celebrating the opening of about two and one-half miles of trail between Route 837 in Clairton and Route 51 in Large. The festivities will take place at 9:30 A.M. near the Port Authority park-and-ride lot in Large.

With the completion of this new trail segment, and the completion of another missing trail link in Bethel Park, about 35 miles are complete of a planned 55-mile Montour Trail network. The new Clairton to Large segment features an asphalt surface to resist erosion from occasional localized flooding.

As with previous trail segments, walkers and bicyclists have appeared on trail as soon as the surface was complete. These users have marveled at how the trail quickly leads them away from busy roadways into quiet places within Peters Creek Valley.

Invited dignitaries to the ceremony include many who helped create this trail segment. The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Allegheny Regional Asset District provided funding. The PA Turnpike Commission built the portion of trail surrounding the new park and ride lot. Allegheny County provided engineering to design the trail and contributed thousands of tons of asphalt millings used as a base material.

Additionally, the municipalities of Clairton and Jefferson Hills provided preliminary grading of the trail surface and removed trash collected by volunteers. Volunteers from the Montour Trail Council and from Bombardier Transportation performed tree and brush cutting.

To get to the ribbon cutting ceremony, follow the park and ride lot signs from Route 51 in Large and then follow the Montour Trail signs.

Paul McKeown

Join California University of PA on Saturday, March 15, at 9 a.m. for their St. Paddy's Day Four Leaf Clover Walk at Southpointe.

Registration for this four-mile walk is \$15, includes a t-shirt and benefits California University of Pa-Southpointe Center Book Scholarship Fund and "Let Them Walk Again."

Call 724-873-2760 for more information.

McDonald-Area Festival to Mark National Trails Day

Mark your calendars now for an MTC-sponsored National Trails Day outing to be held in the Borough of McDonald on Saturday, June 7. Being organized in conjunction with the Allegheny Trail Alliance, who have designated this as their featured National Trails Day event, this outing will showcase a new 5-mile Montour Trail segment linking the existing 18-mile Moon Township-to-McDonald section of the Trail with the 6-mile Cecil-to-Chartiers Creek section.

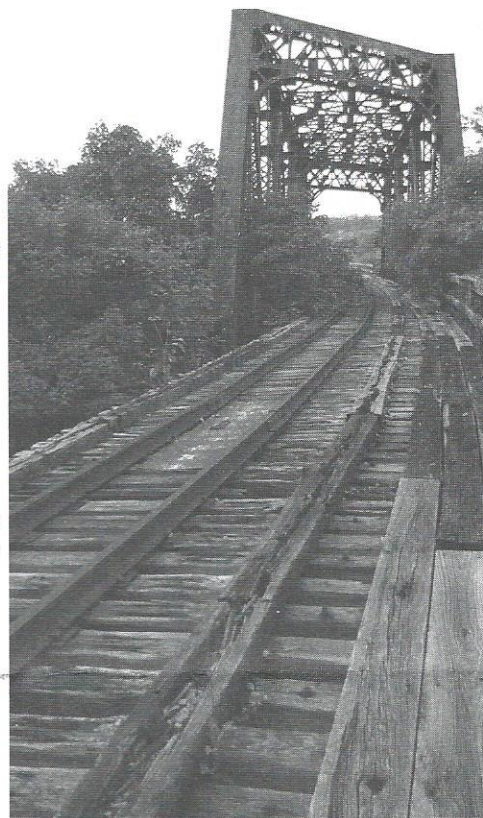


Photo by Ronna Delitto

National Trails Day will feature the area of Trail around the 1000-foot-long McDonald Trestle, which is currently under construction.

Plans for this event are in very preliminary stages at this time, as the Trails Day activities must mesh with the construction schedule for the new trail segment. However, the 980-foot McDonald Trestle will be featured to the greatest extent possible. Another likely focus is the McDonald Welcoming Center and Meeting House, being established at the former location of Kio's Tavern beside the Panhandle Trail right-of-way in McDonald.

Whatever venues we choose to feature, we will try to include attractions that will offer something of interest for persons of all ages and backgrounds. Please watch for future announcements in our next newsletter and in the mainstream press regarding this event.

Stan Sattinger

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

George Blishak
Robert Bolding
Kevin Cecotti
Bob Connolly
Christopher Dill
Bill Dimitroff
Merrill Egorin
Daniel J. Fix
Patricia A. Gotch
J. D. Hohman
Jeffrey W. Kertis
Charles Krepp
Henri-Alexandre N. Lauer
Lawrence G. Lovejoy
Diane Mancini
Ted and Joan Marstiller
Lynda & Craig McKay
Dr. William B. McLaughlin
Ken Petri

Diane M. Redington
Sally & Tom Roncevich
William Santel
Duane Stalker
Steven Suchan
Donald Urban
Stephanie Urchick
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas P.
Woolaway

LEADER'S CIRCLE

Henri-Alexandre N. Lauer
Roy Weil & Mary Shaw

BENEFACTORS

John & Sandy Newman

Membership Co-Chairs - Stefni and Jerry Agin

Allegheny County grants \$52,000 RAD Award

In December, 2002 the Allegheny County Regional Asset District (RAD) awarded the Montour Trail Council \$52,000 for the year 2003. This award, which is administered by our good friends at the Allegheny Land Trust, will be used for two projects in 2003. (See project details below.)

A big thanks to the Allegheny County Regional Asset District for this award. Also, a thank you to the following for their help with the two projects:

- Allegheny County
- McCandless Charitable Trust
- Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) through the assistance of State Rep. John Pippy
- Dave Wright, who provided expert guidance with the grant

(Continued on p. 7)

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.

| | |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT / SENIORS | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORTING | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SUSTAINING | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BENEFACTOR | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LEADERS CIRCLE | \$500 + up |

- ☐ 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 _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (daytime) _____ (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, or Combined Federal Campaign Contributor Choice option #9308, where you work.

Construction Report: 72 Acres Return to Montour Trail Council

Thanks to the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) the Montour Trail Council (MTC) again owns 72 acres of property that once belonged to the bankrupt Montour Railroad. On November 1, 2002, the ALT sold this property to the MTC for \$1. These 72 acres are parallel to and include the Montour Trail from mile "0" in Moon Township to "7.3" at the Enlow tunnel. In addition to the ALT, we are proud to have been able to work with other partners in this elongated process. However, we can now finally say that this land will be preserved for future generations to use, view and enjoy.

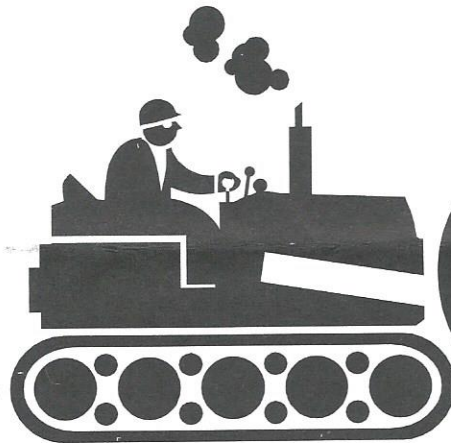
This process actually started in 1999 and had many players before the ultimate successful property transfer on November 1, 2002. The process, which will be explained below in a timeline, was not easy. Numerous organizations and individuals stepped forward at the appropriate time to assist. Following is the list of our friends and partners who have made this acquisition possible:

- Allegheny Land Trust (ALT)
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
- Allegheny County Regional Asset District (ARAD)
- Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA)
- Regional Trail Corporation (RTC)
- Hollow Oak Land Trust (HOLT)
- Coraopolis and Townships of Moon, Findlay & Robinson
- Montour Trail Council Members & board

Please thank these organizations and their members, if you have the good fortune to cross their paths.

The process time line:

- 1991—Allegheny County obtains a 20 foot easement from the railroad and signs a management agreement with the MTC.
- 1999—HOLT pursues acquisition of the corridor by establishing an option to buy with the bankruptcy court. HOLT is successful in receiving a "growing greener" grant from DCNR. HOLT pays for a survey of the property.



- 1999, December—The HOLT board decides not to pursue this acquisition and turns its focus on other properties to acquire and preserve.
- 2000, January – HOLT's option on the property expires. The MTC felt comfortable with this situation, since an easement was owned. We thought no other respective buyer would ever be interested.
- 2000, Mid-January – An individual representing a contractor took out a forty five (45) day option on the property. We were shocked to hear that the purpose of the acquisition was to strip the land for its coveted topsoil. We strongly felt that this topsoil removal would create an environmental disaster in the Montour Run valley.
- The MTC quickly decided to pursue acquisition.

- 2000, February – Numerous meetings were held with our legal counsel Mr. Dick Wilson and various government representatives. Mr. Wilson guided us in our strategies and helped us to develop a workable plan.

- 2000, June – The MTC applies for a grant from the ARAD board for \$99,000. These funds would be the match to the DCNR grant, which is a 50/50 grant.

- 2000, February thru August –

Unfortunately the contractors representative renewed his 45 day option on the property another three times. Finally in August he let the option expire. The MTC finally submits its own option in August.

- 2000, February thru August – During this time the MTC was pursuing various funding options. Board member Stan Sattinger lead the charge by starting the process for the transfer of the DCNR "growing greener" grant to the MTC. We accumulated over 20 letters of support from various organizations and the townships. Unfortunately, DCNR informed us that the MTC could not use the "growing greener" funds, because only land trusts were eligible.
- 2000, September – The ALT board agrees to purchase the property and accept the grant transfer from HOLT. The ARAD matching funds would only be available in the spring and the bankruptcy court was not willing to wait that long. Thus, the MTC made a bold decision by agreeing to pursue

And the Prez sez...

Montour Trail Council Activities in the Winter

What do Montour Trail people do in the winter? Perhaps you think that the answer is, not much, except maybe an occasional quick walk on the trail. Not so. About the only things that do not happen during the winter months are grass cutting and digging by hand in the earth (because it is frozen!).

Atlas Railroad Construction Company has merely slowed down for the winter in its efforts to redeck the McDonald Trestle and build about four miles of trail. All the planning and other meetings go on unabated. There are many people who prepare for, attend and follow-up on the decisions of the regularly monthly scheduled meetings of the Board, the Engineering and Construction Committee, the Mackin Engineering (Washington County) meeting, the A&A Engineering (South Park Township) meeting, and all the Friends meetings.

In fact, as I write this at the beginning of February, during the past week I and others have also participated in a worker appreciation celebration in Bethel Park, a meeting with PENNDOT in Uniontown about trail crossings of state roads affected by the recent PUC agreement, and meeting with the staff of state senatorial candidate John Pippy about the Montour Trail's funding needs.

The point of all this? The TRAIL! And, yes, in case you were wondering, I have also managed to bicycle on the snow-covered trail!

Peter Kohnke

Construction Report, 72 Acres, cont.

(Continued on p. 7)

temporary financing for a purchase before the end of the year. The ATA board agreed to loan the MTC \$200,000 along with a 90 day interest free loan. These funds were financed through an account with the Regional Trail Corporation (RTC). (The RTC manages the Yough North portion of the Great Allegheny Passage.)

- 2000, November – The MTC purchases the property for \$185,000 on 11/22/2000. ARAD approves our request for \$99,000 on 11/29/2000.
- 2001, April – ALT receives permission from DCNR to sell the property back to the MTC after one year.
- 2001, August - The ALT purchases the property from the MTC for \$185,000 using the DCNR grant and the ARAD funds as a match.
- 2001, December – The MTC board changes its bylaws to have the additional designation of a land trust.
- 2002, November - The MTC purchases the property back from the ALT for \$1.

Thanks again to all of the organizations and individuals involved who have helped us preserve and protect this beautiful corridor. It wasn't easy.

\$52,000 RAD Award, cont.

process

(Continued from p. 5)

A breakdown of how the RAD money, along with other grants and donations, will be used for two projects to improve the Trail follows:

Project #1 Total Cost - \$52,000

For Safety Reasons on the Montour Trail: Purchase Mowing Equipment with a Boom Rotary Cutter Mounted on the Side. (The equipment will be shared with the Panhandle & Youghiogheny River Trails.)

RAD Award = \$27,000

McCandless Charitable Trust = \$20,000

DCED = \$5,000

Project # 2 Total Cost - \$35,500

Safety Improvements Cliff Mine Road Trail Head: Separate Trail from 50-Car Parking Area & Pave Parking Area - Montour Trail Mile 6.0

RAD Award = \$25,000

Allegheny County Millings donation = \$10,000

Findlay/N. Fayette Friends of the Trail = \$500

Dennis Pfeiffer



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Burgh's Run a great chance to show off picture-taking skills

We're hoping to capture every leg of April 27th's Burgh's 10K Run and 2-Mile Fun Walk, and we need your help.

Shutterbugs both professional and amateur are needed to take pictures along the race route. A collage will be put together to commemorate the event. Photographers who have contributed to the MTC Trail Letter are especially encouraged to help out.

If you are available that Sunday, come out and enjoy a fine spring event with us. Contact John Hooton at 412-257-4101 and let him know of your availability and interest. And thanks!

