



MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 15 Issue 2

March / April 2004

For your consideration

Trust in your own untried capacity.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

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MTC Web Address

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

Trail Blazers Recognized for 10 Years' Work

Every year at the annual dinner the Montour Trail Council (MTC) honors individuals for special contributions with Trail Blazer Spike Awards. These awards consist of an actual refurbished gold painted Montour Railroad spike mounted on a striking wood plaque. This year the majority of the awards were presented for ten years of outstanding support for a completed trail section.

2003 was the tenth-year anniversary of the trail being completed in the Moon Township, Robinson Township, Findlay Township and North Fayette Township sections. These sections, which include the first 11½ miles of trail, have been a huge success in the communities and the entire area.

In 1992, a rather interesting win / win agreement occurred with the four townships. The townships agreed to have their respective "road departments" build the trail. During non-peak "road work" times, the townships built the trail using engineering plans from the MTC and a significant donation from Allegheny County for all of the crushed limestone surface material. The respective friends groups and other MTC volunteers refurbished bridges and installed fencing and signage.

During the last ten years, the Townships have

continued to help with major repairs on occasions. Also, the friends groups have donated many, many hours of volunteer service to maintain this aggregate section. Thus, the MTC presented 2003 Trail Blazer Spike Awards in recognition of this achievement.

10th Year Township Awards: Moon Township, Robinson Township, Findlay Township and North Fayette Township.

10th Year Friends Group Awards: Richard Quasey, Dean & Barb Arlett, Jerald Bates, Don Behnke, Bob & Karen Boyce, Jesse & Diane Forquer, Frank Keppel, Tim Killmeyer, Harry Kish, Bill Morphy, Dave Murphy, Dennis Pfeiffer, Donna Rosser & Ted Weidner.

In addition, Trail Blazer Spike Awards were presented by the MTC to two very special individuals. Tom Fix was presented an award for his outstanding service in handling all telephone calls to the MTC for its first ten years. Jerry Agin was presented an award for his many years of friendly verbal and written com-

munications with the MTC membership. In addition Jerry maintained the MTC web site for a few years, including performing an excellent upgrade in the year 2000.

Thanks again to all of the recipients of the MTC Trail Blazer Spike Awards. The Montour Trail has become a much better place for all of us to enjoy due to your outstanding efforts.

Dennis Pfeiffer




Trail Blazer Spike Award Winners included (clockwise from upper left) Friends Group Volunteer Dan Behnke; North Fayette Supervisors John Meyers and Dan Fink; Volunteer Jerry Agin; and Findlay Township officials (from left) Tom Gallant, Gary Klingman, and Janet Craig.

THE MONTOUR TRAIL

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

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Editor

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Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

Are we still talking about the weather? Well, lately it seems that spring will indeed come to our environs at long last. This has been a long, cold, harsh winter and if you like your snow ice covered, bully for you!

For the rest of us, however, the thought that soon we may traverse our beloved Trail without fear of falling is keeping my heart warm while my toes freeze (those high natural gas prices, you know).

All joking aside, there have been plenty of Trail users spotted over the past couple of frigid months. We even launched a new event thanks to our Peters Friends group who postponed their Twilight Trail Walk from a warm, rainy Sunday to a frosty, snowy one (see the story on page 6). The attendance was great, which just goes to show that our Trail is a 365-day event (except this year, of course, when we're open 366 days).

And as spring approaches, that's when the MTC gets into full swing. While we are hardly dormant during the winter months, longer (and warmer) days mean more construction, more Trail maintenance and more Trail events.

First on tap (borrowing punning from our John Hooton) is the Burgh's Run on April 25. For those of you who may not have a flyer enclosed, we are hoping to have the application for download online (www.montourtrail.org). And you can stop by Burgh's in Bridgeville for an application, as well.

And stay tuned for even more special events and Trail openings as the year progresses. We'll be on the lookout for you!

Astrid Cook

March 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	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			

April 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	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	

Calendar of Events

MTC Board Meeting – March 15

MTC Board Meeting – April 19

Burgh's Pizza and Wings 10K Run and 2 Mile Walk – April 25

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.

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**. From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil-Henderson Road; other months meet at the MTC Offices, Call 412-257-2553 for more information. **Work & Clean-up party**, every **third Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am**. (Subject to change; check information boards.) Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 412-257-2553 for more info.
- ◆ **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.
- ◆ **Peters Township Events:**
Friends of the Trail Meeting, **first Monday** of the month at Peters Township Parks and Recreation Community Room at 7:45 pm. For more information on **Work & Clean-up parties**, please contact Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at mcimgrund@adelphia.net.

Four's the Charm for Burgh's Upcoming Race

Our weather deep freeze is almost over and our thoughts turn now to warm weather pursuits and that brings up one of our favorites. "Burgh's 10 K Run and Two Mile Walk" is scheduled for Sunday, April 25, 2004. How successful it has been in its first three years! Last year we had over 300 runners and cleared some \$15,000 to benefit the Montour Trail.

This year, sponsors Dan, Frank and Tom Daily, owners of Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub in Bridgeville have raised the bar (sorry, I couldn't help the reference) to a new high (oh, forgive me!): They are looking to raise \$20,000 this year. Outstanding...and I'll bet they do it! We should not take their projections for an automatic fulfillment, however. You runners, Trail geeks, and area pizza lovers must step up to the plate (change of reference here) and help in every way possible. If you can't be a corporate sponsor, be a personal contributor, or a runner, or a walker, or a working volunteer. There are plenty of ways to participate and they all help.

Meanwhile, go to the restaurant and put a \$10 bill on their restaurant "tote" board. Your name and generosity will be there for all to see. With a DJ to keep spirits pumped (there I go again) and lots of good fellowship, you will have a fun race day. Look for applications here in your newsletter, on our website, or at the restaurant.

John Hooton

Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the May / June Trail-Letter will be due **no later than** April 1, 2004

Eagle Scout Project enhances Montour Trail

Max Mendelsohn of Boy Scout Troop 1331, VFW Post 764 of McMurray, coordinated the building of the Trail Information Center (both pictured at right) at the junction of the Arrowhead and Montour Trails in Peters Township, one-third mile from the Brush Run Road parking area.

Max built a trail kiosk that will serve as an information center for Peters Township Park and Recreation Department, MTC, and Trail users in general. This project includes two built-in benches where Trail users may rest or don their inline skates.

An Eagle Scout project must benefit the community, be of lasting value, and give



the Scout an opportunity to demonstrate leadership. This project definitely fulfilled all of those requirements. Max and his crew of Scouts, adult Scouts, and friends spent more than 100 hours constructing this Trail project.

Max was especially enthusiastic about this project since he is an avid Trail user and has been since his early childhood. He has cycled all the completed segments of the trails from Pittsburgh to Meyersdale and from Cumberland, MD, to Washington, DC, on the C&O trail.

Thanks to Max and all his friends for building this information kiosk in Peters!

And the Prez sez...

Hello to members and supporters of the Montour Trail Council (MTC). I have the privilege of serving as your new president in the year 2004. In addition, due to some unique circumstances all of the other officers are also new in 2004. Mark Imgrund of Peters Township is the new vice president, Astrid Cook of Bethel Park is the new secretary, and Judy Thompson of Thornburg is the new treasurer. Mark, Astrid, and Judy all have been excellent volunteers with the MTC previously. We are very fortunate to have these three very talented individuals as officers. This year should be a very exciting and busy one for the MTC. Speaking for the new officers, I know I can say that we are all looking forward to continuing the excellent work of the previous officers.

The previous officers were very special individuals and are to be commended for a job well done. Peter Kohnke has been excellent in leading us these past three years as president. There has been much progress with adding completed trail during Peter's tenure (the McDonald Trestle opening in September being the most spectacular of these additions). As Peter explained in our previous newsletter, among other efforts he will continue to be an active leader of the Bethel Park Friends Group and the Clifton Road bridge project.

Bruce Barron set the all-time record by handling the secretary position for seven years. Bruce was superb in detailing the events in the MTC board meetings. Bruce also will continue his volunteer efforts by leading our foundation requests activities, heading our public relations efforts, and heading our efforts in billing for property easements.

Mike Pucci served as treasurer for two years. Mike was able to relate the monthly transactions from the engineering & construction process with the appropriate income and expense source. His excellent detailed monthly spreadsheets enabled the MTC to keep an accurate window of MTC's expenses and income. He also was able to acquire a DCNR grant & DCED award for the Peters Township trail connection to Bethel Park. Fortunately for Mike and his family he has received a significant promotion in his day job. Unfortunately for the MTC, this position came with a transfer out of state. We wish Mike and his family great luck in their new beginnings.

The final thank you is to Judy Thomson. Judy is both new and old to the treasurer position. Judy had been the official treasurer for five years before Mike's tenure. She was the assistant treasurer for the last two years. Judy has however expertly maintained the detailed records, managed the bill payment process, and helped our external auditors produce the yearly financial report during the entire seven years and counting.

Thanks again to the special individuals mentioned and to you our members and supporters. As mentioned previously we are looking forward to an exciting and busy 2004 for the MTC.

Have a great Montour Trail day!

Dennis Pfeiffer

Editor's Note: What the very modest Mr. Pfeiffer fails to mention is that he has served admirably as our Vice President. We thank Dennis for his past, present and future service and leadership with the MTC.

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

Rick Beran & Family

D. S. Carlson

Jim Enright

Ken Flisek

Laura & Gary Graf

Jill Julin

Ken Krempasky

Donald J. Lee

Rick Lesser

Richard & Rebecca Lindner

Janice Miknevich

Guenther Mueller

Pratt Family

Susan & John Stipanovich

Steve Stroman

Alice & Tim Thomassy

Regis & Paola Turocy

Gwen Wisniewski

BENEFACTORS

D. S. Carlson

Marshall Fausold

Karl Waldner

LEADER'S CIRCLE

Mary Lee & Richard L. Gowell

Andrew & Janice Poole

Judy & Tom Thompson

Roy Weil & Mary Shaw

And a special thank you to...

McMurray Rotary Club for its \$500 donation

Membership Co-Chairs - Stefni and Jerry Agin

Brentwood Bank Sponsors Public Service Announcement for MTC

If you have Comcast Cable, you may have seen our Trail highlighted in an excellently produced Public Service Announcement (PSA). Some people have wondered just what exactly we're up to using Trail funds to publicize our need for more Trail funds.

Well, before you jump to any conclusions, Jim Jackson of Brentwood Bank approached the MTC awhile back with an offer we couldn't refuse: A free PSA courtesy of the bank, which would be produced by Comcast as part of Brentwood Bank's advertising contract. Their ad contract allows the bank to run two PSA campaigns each year (previous beneficiaries include the South Hills YMCA, Camp AIM, and Early Learning Institute).

In other words, the PSAs running throughout the region asking people to help us "bridge the gaps" cost the MTC *not one thin dime!* These slick, professionally produced ads are all courtesy of Brentwood Bank and its commitment to helping the South Hills in general and the Montour Trail in particular.

We thank Jim and everyone at Brentwood Bank for their support and generosity in choosing us as the organization that is the focus of their latest PSA campaign. The ad is so slick, people think we had to pay for it! Sometimes "too good to be true" isn't.

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.

- ☐ **STUDENT / SENIORS** \$15
- ☐ **INDIVIDUAL** \$25
- ☐ **FAMILY** \$35
- ☐ **SUPPORTING** \$50
- ☐ **SUSTAINING** \$100
- ☐ **BENEFACTOR** \$250
- ☐ **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.

Twilight Trail Walk Brings out Supporters on a Winter's Night in Peters Township

Well, no one actually *ran*, but the January 11, 2004, Twilight Trail Walk event certainly was successful! Between 200 and 300 trail enthusiasts, many with pets and children, stepped briskly into the clear, 27-degree night. Entry fees gave everyone personal "glow necklaces," raffle tickets, and lighted magnet pins to accompany their one-mile luminaria walk. The walk helps celebrate the growing connection between the Peters Township Arrowhead Trail and the non-profit Montour Trail since the initial dedication at the Bethel Park Branch last June.

Trailwalk hosts, Scones and Cones proprietor Dennie Laughlin and his friend Jennie Smith, provided free drinks, roasted marshmallows and good cheer at his establishment from 5 to 7 p.m. on that Sunday. Co-hosts for the evening, "Friends of the Montour Trail in Peters Township," had set up over 40 raffle prizes on their tote board. Scones' outdoor cafe, delightful in summer, was brightened by Peters High School's singing group, Lyricube's, a capella rendition of "Sitting on the Dock of the Bay" and several other selections. Thanks to performers Rick Browell, Nick Domachowski, Liz Harza, Lindsay Klimcheck, Ryan Noonan, Chris Obarski, and Katie Stratico for their fine work!

Thanks also to sponsors Eat 'n Park, The Market Place and Subway, for their support. With event fees and community help, the new Friends group netted over \$700 for the evening. "Friends" groups help heighten community relations as well as maintain and develop the Trail experience. Mark Imgrund, Peters Friends President, invites interested persons to attend their monthly meetings at the Peters Twp. Parks and Rec building and would also appreciate help when work parties are announced. (See page 3 for more information on how you can participate.)



Tom and Pat Robbins and their friends enjoy the companionship of their greyhounds and in a public-spirited way are helping to extend the lives of these fine retired racers. The many dogs who participated in the walk were treated to free dog biscuits to fuel their evening journey.

Admittedly, a January night Trail walk is unusual, but organizers thought the season would add to its appeal. It all started when Jennie Smith and Denny Laughlin were enjoying a stroll last fall when they met up with a hard-working Trail gardener, Berenice Hooton, and began exploring ways to bring attention to the new Trail activity in Peters. Jennie suggested a winter luminaria walk, and it quickly sprouted supporters. Now we hear of a summer version tentatively scheduled for Friday, July 30. Although such events do require planning and leg work, they can be readily adopted by other Trail groups as a fun, family-oriented activity. Could this be the beginning of a National Event rivaling the posture of Mother's Day? Who knows!

Thanks to all who participated and especially to all the volunteers who gave us a memorable winter's excursion.

Mark Imgrund

Great Turnout in Snow for "Trot for Tots"

The third annual "Trot for Tots" race took place on December 7, 2003, and had over 220 registered runners total for both the 5K and 10K events. The races started near Wickes and were run on the Trail toward the Enlow Ball Field and back. The course was covered with compacted snow. The event is staged by Elite Runners and Walkers and is for the benefit of the USMC Toys for Tots and the Montour Trail. The race director for the event is Kevin Smith, the owner of Elite Runners and Walkers. Kevin is one of the major promoters of running events in the Pittsburgh area. Kevin and his staff staged the entire event. This year's event raised approximately \$1,300 to be shared by the Montour Trail and the Toys for Tots along with generating several car-loads of toys that were donated by runners and businesses.

The remarkable S. Mark Courtney won the 5K, and then ran the 10K, finishing 2nd, both in the open class. At age 47 Mark rarely loses and remains very competitive. Mark is the owner of Runner's High timing service, which furnishes the timing services for the IKEA /Montour Trail ½ Marathon and 5K Run and Walk and the Burgh's Run. After the race, Mark showed off his secret: wearing racing shoes with spikes. Most of the other runners were wearing multipurpose running shoes. Note that Doug Basinski, age 32, also doubled out, finishing second in the 5K and winning the 10K. I don't know how these guys do it I was always dead after one race!

Sabine Kane, age 43, doubled out in the women's group, winning the 5K and finishing second in the 10K open class.

The winners with pace per mile were as follows:



5 K Men's 1st S.Mark Courtney 5:52, 2nd Doug Basinski 5:55

5k Women's 1st Sabine Kane 7:11

10K Men's 1st Doug Basinski 6:15, 2nd S.Mark Courtney 6:19

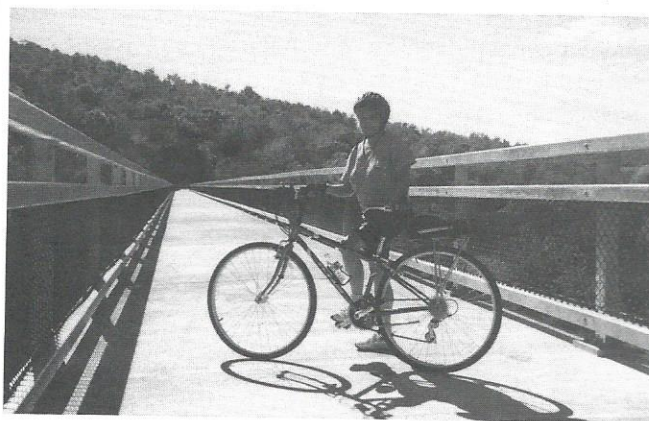
10K Women's 1st Tina Bailey 7:07, 2nd Sabine Kane 7:24.

For complete results check Mark's website at www.runhigh.com.

The Montour Trail salutes Kevin Smith for all of the hard work done in support of the Montour Trail. Races like this one give many runners something to point to and to gauge their conditioning and have some fun.

Jess Forquer

Trail User's POV (Point of View)



"I am a monitor on the Trail and frequently ride in the Moon / Coraopolis areas.

"My husband took this picture last fall (October) on the new McDonald Trestle. On this day, I rode the newly opened portion of the Trail from the McDonald Trestle to Venice.

"I thought you'd enjoy seeing the nice fall view!

"Many thanks to all your volunteers who provide us with much enjoyment all year long."

Lin Francis

Editor's Note: If you have a picture of yourself on the Trail and a story to go with it, we hope you'll send us a snapshot and a brief description of your day on the Trail so that we may run Trail User's POV on a regular basis. Please include a SASE if you would like your photo mailed back to you.



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Web site Update

We are aware that some sections of our Web site have not been updated regularly. All our volunteers are busy people but we are in the process of coordinating all our various technologies in an effort to keep everyone informed about our Trail.

In the near future, we hope to offer more than just regular updates to the Web site. We are considering more interactivity, including online membership renewals and, perhaps, even an online store where you can buy MTC merchandise to show off on your trail jaunts!

So we thank you for your patience and be sure to keep a look out for the updates and changes. We hope you'll find the "new and improved" Web site even better than you remember it!

