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MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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It Has Finally Begun by Dennis Sims

Construction has finally commenced on the long-awaited realignment of the PA Routes 980 and 50 intersection at Venice, Cecil Township near Montour Trail MP 22. The project includes a 3-span overpass that will take the Montour Trail over the intersection.

The project will take place in three phases:



Looking west from the 980 parking area and the beginning of the detour. Photo by Dennis Sims

1: The construction of the Trail Bridge, which will necessitate a Trail detour now through mid-August via PA Route 50 and Southview Road. This a route many of us used before the stairs were installed. By the time you read this, the stairs are expected to have been dismantled.

2. In mid to late June, work on PA 980 will require the road to be closed for a few days.



Looking east from the steps across the intersection. Photo by Bryan Seip

3: From mid-June to mid-August, PA 980 and PA 50 will be limited one lane with traffic controlled by flaggers.

When completed, the intersection will be a conventional crossroad controlled by a four-way stop with the Trail bridge taking users safely over the intersection. CH&D Enterprises of New Stanton, PA is the contractor. For more background on this project see the May-June 2013 MTC Newsletter: (<http://www.montourtrail.org/news/2013/mayjune2013.pdf>)

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Library Viaduct Construction Update By Tom Prezel

Thornbury Inc. continues to make good progress on the Library Viaduct Rehabilitation. We also continue to have good support for construction inspection by Mackin Engineering, for engineering consultation by WEC Engineering, and contract support from PennDOT District 11-0.



Above: Looking west to east across the Viaduct. Photo by David Oyler.

After a winter shutdown, work resumed on March 9th. Significant work was performed on installing the railings that week. Work is expected to continue through March and should be completed by the contract completion date of April 1, 2015.

Until the trail approaches are complete. the bridge will be closed.



Right: The Viaduct as seen from the Rite-Aid parking lot along Route 88. Photo by Tom Prezel

Visit the Montour Trail Web Site at: www.montourtrail.org

To Converse, join the Yahoo Group at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Montour-Trail/info> or

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43518292159>



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The Prez Sez:

Springtime feels especially welcoming this year. Despite what was declared to be a tough winter, the periods of enjoying the Trail by ski or snowshoe were relatively brief. (Not that we were wishing for Boston snowfalls!) And, with our Winter's coldest and snowiest times occurring towards its end, we all have been looking for a different reason to be out there. Remembering again the enveloping answer of warm Spring sunshine is one of life's great joys.

The wildflowers are especially abundant and colorful this spring, having been well nurtured by snowmelt and our Spring rains. Landscapes along the trail are greening up fast, preparing to shade us from the late summer sun. But that will be much later; for now, the brilliant colors and pervasive fragrances provide an irresistible draw, to get us away from the busy-ness of our lives and towards simply being a part of the wonder of Nature. I hope that by now you have been able to get out onto the Montour, at least for a short end-of-the-day stroll if not something more. Nowhere else around here can you so easily get out of your car and into the fresh air of wood and field.

This is the season of rebirth, too, for the volunteers that make the Montour Trail the easy and elegant pathway to nature that it is. Quite clearly: Without all of you, it simply wouldn't be there. As warm weather brings trail-hungry people pouring out of their houses and onto the Montour this spring, the need for volunteer workers is especially strong. Please consider helping out on your nearby trail section. Contact your local Friends of the Trail group; their information is listed on page 3. You can also call or email the Montour Trail office; contact information is shown on this page.

The Montour is one of very few trail organizations which for a quarter century has remained all-volunteer, with no paid staff. Other non-profit organizations, not to mention public officials and the news media, find it nothing short of astounding when they come to see that such an extensive trail system has been assembled and maintained entirely by volunteers. We do use engineers and contractors when needed for the big stuff, of course. There are several large scale trail projects that contractors are currently moving towards completion; you can read about some of them elsewhere in this newsletter. In this space, though, I want to personally thank each volunteer, in advance, for the time and talents you will be dedicating to improving the Trail this year. And if you are one of those who has thought of seeing if there would be something that you could do to help out, this is the time to do it.

We are lucky to have the chance to be the stewards of a facility where hundreds of thousands of people every year can enjoy travel and outdoor recreational experiences big and small. The Montour Trail, along with the other trails in Southwestern Pennsylvania, continues to be a big plus to the quality of life for the people of the region, and is one of the reasons that make this area such a nice place to live. As a volunteer, it really is a privilege to see one's small contributions multiplied into such large positive effects. Your efforts will long be appreciated on a scale far beyond what you will ever see.

Enjoy this fine Spring!

Ned Williams

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

MTC Board Meeting:

Every third Monday of the month - 6:00 p.m. 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 Dennis at 412-262-3748 for more information or to get on the agenda.

Airport Area Friends: (MP 0 to MP 12.6 and the 6.3 mile

Airport Connector) The Airport Area Friends of the Trail meet every second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Forest Grove Fire Hall, 2044 Ewings Mill Road, Robinson Township, PA 15108. New volunteers are always welcomed. Contact Phyllis McChesney at 412-264-6303 for more information. Numerous Saturday "work parties" are held during the season. Please call 412-262-3748 to lend a hand at the work parties.

Fort Cherry Friends: (MP 12.6 to MP 20.7)

Friends of the Trail meeting: Second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the McDonald Trail Station, 160 S. McDonald Street, McDonald, PA 15057 (adjacent to the Panhandle Trail). Work and cleanup parties will be scheduled as needed. For more information contact Tim Thomassy, 724-926-4617 or Chuck Hughey, 724-926-9436.

Cecil Friends: (MP 20.7 to MP 28.5)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. From May-August, meetings are held at the Kurnick Access area along the trail off Cecil Henderson Road; other months (with the exception of November and December) meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-496-4308 for more information, or email densimwx@comcast.net

Peters Township Friends: (MP 28.5 to 30.4, Library Jct to near MP 35 and part of the Bethel Branch)

Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Community Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m. For more information on work and cleanup parties, please contact Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132, or for monthly meetings, Mark Imgrund at 724-941-6351 or by e-mail at markimgrund@gmail.com

Bethel Park Friends: (The 2.75 mile Bethel Branch and a short piece of main line trail around MP 35)

Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. Work and cleanup party, every second and fourth Saturday of the month - 8:30 a.m. Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.

South Hills Friends: (MP 35.4 to 46.3)

Meeting second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room, located behind the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park, 15129. Work and cleanup parties scheduled and advertised as needed. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler@verizon.net, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownp@comcast.net

The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

The Frank Ludwin Memorial Tails for Tail 5K Fun Dog Walk

The Cecil Friends of the Montour Trail proudly announce the return of the Tails for Trails 5K Fun Dog Walk on National Trails Day, Saturday, June 6, 2015. The Walk will bark off at 9:00 a.m. and head east to the turn-around at the Tandem Connection crossing the bridge over Morganza Road. The walk starts at the Kurnick (National) Trailhead where there will be several vendors featuring pet related products. As always, there will be hot dogs grilled to perfection along with beverages and sweets for the participants when they return. Along with the walk, there will be a Chinese Auction and door prizes for the participants



and you will be able to have photos of your four-legged furry friend taken by a professional photographer.

Frank Ludwin, who has been our grillmaster for the past 10 years, will not be with us. Frank passed away suddenly just before Christmas last year. In his honor, the event will now bear his name: The Frank Ludwin Memorial Tails for Trails 5K Fun Dog Walk. Proceeds from the event will go towards his project: The Southpointe Connector, a portion of which between Montour Trail and Klinger Park is being named after him. The Trail will then continue along Reserve Drive and then alongside Klinger Road into Southpointe.

Registration forms are available at several locations on and near the trail and on the web at www.montour.com. The registration fee is the same as last year; \$10 for one dog and \$16 for two dogs if you register by May 18; afterwards will be \$12 a dog.

We Need a Few Good People

In 1998, the Montour Trail Council decided to start an organized group of volunteer Trail Monitor Patrols to assist trail users in case of emergencies and non-emergencies. This group is still active today, but due to attrition we are in need of some new recruits.

What does a Trail Monitor Patrol do?

Trail Monitor Patrols are encouraged to carry cell phones and maintain current CPR certification. They carry gate keys to open gates in advance of emergency vehicles' arrival, if needed. In the event of an emergency like cardiac arrest, a few seconds could be a matter of life or death. Our Trail Monitor Patrols also function as guides for the Trail Council, offering a friendly face greeting people and providing directions to trail users when needed.

Law enforcement on the Montour Trail is the responsibility of the local police, and in many areas the police patrol the trail, often on bikes. But since police can't be everywhere, another important function of our patrols is surveillance of the trail as "eyes and ears" for law enforcement. As Director of Trail Security, I can tell you that since 1998 we have had very few serious incidents. I believe that one of the reasons we have had little trouble on the trail is because of the presence of these patrols.

If you are a walker, biker or runner at least 18 years old, you use the trail 2 to 3 times a week, and being a patrol sounds interesting to you, please contact Jesse Forquer via email at jforquer@comcast.net or phone (412 859-3737) for further details.



You can recognize a Trail Monitor Patrol by the yellow T-shirt or Vest with "Montroon" lettering. There is another group call the Trail Ambassadors. They form a more ceremonial role than the Trail Patrol and can be recognized by their cycling jerseys. The ambassadors are a group of knowledgeable people that are mobile "information boards" They ride or walk the trail to provide information, assist with minor

mechanical problem and promote membership. Do you wonder what's happening on the Montour Trail stop them and ask. You will find them very informative

Which group should I be a member of? If you are an out-spoken and gregarious individual, the Trail Ambassadors are for you. If you are attentive and sharp-eyed, being a trail monitor is probably for you.

Trail Blazer Award Winner Sam Hvitfelt

At the first Tour the Montour Meeting this year on February 17, Sam Hvitfelt was presented a Trail Blazer Award. (above right). Sam was presented this award for her leadership of the Tour the Montour over the past eight years. Sam was not able to attend the annual dinner due to shoulder surgery when other awards were presented.

This year's riding of the Tour the Montour takes place on September 26, 2015. Look for updates in future issues of this newsletter and at www.montourtrail.org.

The Montour Trail & Social Media



In 2014, the Montour Trail Council (MTC) made significant strides in the use of social media, a trend that we expect will expand during 2015. The most expansive growth is in the Montour Trail Facebook group, which had over 1325 members as of mid-March. All members of

the group have the ability to post and comment on the site. Group members use the site to stay up to date with Trail events and happenings, and to connect with other trail supporters. Join us!

The MTC maintains a Facebook account so we can highlight "official" posts in the Facebook group, but we don't invite people to be Facebook friends of this account. Our "friends" are all of the members of the Montour Trail Facebook group.

About a year we also began active use of the trail's Twitter account, and have a growing community of 250+ followers. We use Twitter for announcements and news headlines. We retweet comments and pictures from trail users, and also retweet items of interest from the wider rails-to-trails community.



If you're not yet following the Trail on Facebook and Twitter we urge you to join us. Search for "Montour Trail" on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter @MontourTrail.



The Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub 10K/5K as taken from their web page



On Sunday, October 12, 2014, Burgh's Pizza & Wing Pub presented a check in the amount of \$30,000.00 to the Montour Trail Council from the proceeds of the 14th Annual Burgh's Pizza & Wing Pub 10K / 5K Runs and 2 Mile Fun Walk for family, friends held on Sunday, April 27, 2014. This brings our 14 year event total donations to the ongoing development and maintenance of the Montour Trail here in Western Pennsylvania to

\$300,000.00.

Our 15th Annual Burgh's Pizza & Wing Pub 5K / 10K Runs and 2 Mile Fun Walk is scheduled for Sunday, April 19, 2015 at Cecil Park and Montour Trail. On-line registration is now open. Just click the "Register Now" button on our race page. Registration fees are presently at their lowest so register on-line early and guarantee yourself an opportunity to win an HD-TV donated by Bridgeville Appliance. The start times for the events are: 5K at 9:15 a.m., 10K at 10:00 a.m. and the 2 Mile Walk 10:15 a.m.

The success of this event goes to the great group of volunteers from local businesses, Montour Trail Council members, Cecil Twp. Parks & Rec, Cecil Police Dept., South Bridge EMS, Burgh's team members and especially Race Committee members. In addition to our volunteers, local business partners and customers making monetary donations. Special thanks to our two Corporate Partners (\$2500 monetary donation:; Wilson-McGinley Distributing / Miller Lite and Cintas – The Uniform Company for their ongoing support. View our official event results at www.runhigh.com. Check out our event photos on our Facebook page and follow us on Twitter @burghspizzawing or on Instagram @burghspizzawingpub.

For additional event information on this family fun event go to the :

<http://www.montourtrail.org/events/displayevent.asp?id=1>

Race photos are available for viewing on our Burgh's facebook page...like us there and follow us on Twitter (@burghspizzawing) and Instagram {burghspizzawingpub}.

This is a fun family event with proceeds donated to the continued development & maintenance of the Montour Trail. There are cash awards to the top 3 male / female 10K Run finishers, special award to top 3 male / female 5K Run finishers, along with age group awards. A great post- race party of wings, pasta, hoagies & more, along with beer, water & soda and DJ will be available for your entertainment.

Montour Trail Half Marathon and 5K Race by Jan Carey

Preparations for the 2015 UPMC Urgent Care - Montour Trail Half Marathon and 5K, scheduled for Saturday September 12, 2015, are underway. It is the 20th Anniversary of the event, all proceeds of which benefit the Montour Trail. The past success of the Half Marathon is by all measures the result of the work of many volunteers -- those helping with planning and pre-registration, those arriving well before dawn on race day to prepare for participant arrival, and those handling the clean-up. Volunteers have in the past given generously of their time and talents and that effort is hoped for again this year. We are happy to have Joe Stabile, Director of Healthy Living, PNC YMCA Branch, return again as Race Director in 2015.

In this early stage, a call goes out to individuals that could help with sponsors, race logistics, and the public relations effort. Have you wanted to support the Montour Trail but were not sure how? Do you work for a company that may be interested in being a corporate sponsor? Now is a great opportunity given the number of volunteers and breadth of talent it takes to stage this classic event, including graphic design help for T-shirts, flyers, and social media forums, set-up and teardown chores, and, no small task -- getting the participants to the Start Line on time. Those of you who have staffed the event in the past may have specific recommendations as to where there is room for improvement. Your comments are welcome and can be directed to mtcracedirector@montourtrail.org.

For those of you intending to run the Half Marathon/5K, you can find more information about the event and register online at www.Race360.com. Information is also available at www.montourtrail.org. If, having run the Race in the past, you have an interesting story that you would like to share, let us know.

With Trail volunteer help and the hardy-of-heart participants, the Montour Trail Half Marathon/5K should be a memorable 20th Run.

2015 Montour Trail Events

April 19: Burgh's Pizza and Wings 10k/5K and 2 Mile Family Walk

May 9: Airport Area Friends Penny Day

June 6: Cecil Friends Frank Ludwin Memorial Tails for Trails 5K Fun Dog Walk

July 31: Peters Friends Twilight Trail Walk

September 12: UPMC Urgent Care - Montour Trail Half Marathon and 5K

September 26: Tour the Montour

October 10: Bethel, Peters and South Hills Penny Day

November: Annual Meeting

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

Montour Cabooses

By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

At the rear end of every Montour Railroad main line train was a caboose. Most trains today do not carry cabooses, with railroads opting to eliminate the extra weight and thus fuel needed to haul them. Cabooses were phased out of operation in the mid-to-late 1980's. They are still in use at places where a train must be shoved along a section of track in front of a locomotive, serving as a safety platform, with the train's conductor acting as a set of eyes on the leading end of the train.

Cabooses in the Montour era were used as an office and transportation for the conductor and brakemen. The conductor had a desk where he would complete his paperwork and car bills. In current days this information is handled by computers and with smaller crews operating trains, there is no need for the conductor to have a separate car. Benches and a toilet were provided for the crew's comfort. A coal fired stove was provided for heat and sometimes used for cooking. Many a meal was made using the old stoves in the Montour cabooses, with the train crew proving to be good and resourceful chefs.



Montour #48 was one of ten wooden cabooses built for the Montour by the Standard Steel Car Company in Butler in 1929. It was retired from service in 1971. Photo courtesy Michael Thompson Collection.

Early Montour cabooses were made by converting wooden box cars, adding doors and perhaps a few windows or a cupola where a brakeman could keep an eye on the train cars in front of him, watching for problems or defects. (Caboose 48 photo)

Later cabooses were made as specialized rolling stock, such as several 4-wheel bobber type purchased in 1921 and retired in 1936. These were small and cramped, and tended to have a pretty rough ride. The wooden Montour cabooses mostly were painted in the traditional red color. (Caboose 29 photo)

Larger wooden cabooses made their way onto the Montour as coal traffic increased in the 1930's. They had steel underframes to withstand the forces of helper locomotives pushing on the rear of a loaded coal train. Several used wooden cabooses were also bought from



Caboose 29 was one of three wooden 4-wheel bobber type purchased from the New York Ontario & Western RR in 1921. It was retired in 1936. Photo courtesy Gene P. Schaeffer.

other railroads and served for almost 40 years.

In 1969, the Montour's parent company, the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie RR, purchased 11 steel cabooses built in 1944 that the Union Pacific RR was retiring. They arrived at the P&LE McKees Rocks shops wearing their full UP yellow colors. The cabooses were quickly repainted with the P&LE green scheme and reassigned to several subsidiary railroads, including the Montour. Of the 11 cabooses, seven went to the Montour to replace outdated wooden ones. Two went to the Youngstown & Southern (Y&S), one to the Pittsburgh, Chartiers & Youghiopheny (PC&Y) and one stayed on the P&LE. The Montour cabooses entered service in March, 1970 and served on the railroad until they were retired between 1981 and 1983. (Caboose 33 photo)



The conductor and brakeman keep watch as caboose 33 leads a train shoving through Library Junction. Gene P. Schaeffer photo

The Montour used cabooses until the end of operations. At times, the caboose would be leading a train as it would be shoved along one of the sections of the railroad. One common occurrence was for a train working Brookside Lumber in Bethel Park to be shoved several miles to Library Junction, where the train could be turned on the wye so that the locomotive would then be leading and pulling the train westbound. Another was on the Library Branch where trains were shoved to or from Montour Mine #10 or to the interchange at Snowden, where there was no place to turn a train. The conductor and brakemen would act as the leading eyes of the train, watching for obstructions and other problems.

Several ex-Montour cabooses still survive as displays or in non-operational railroad themed use. The recently added caboose beside the trail at the Montour Mine #4 site at Milepost 30 was one of the 11 UP cabooses purchased by the P&LE. This particular caboose went to the Youngstown & Southern, but is one of the same batch that worked on the Montour until operations ended.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Yahoo group at http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/ There are currently 339 members from across the country. You are encouraged to join. There is a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad at this location and you can pose questions of its membership, from whom you are sure to get an answer. There is also much information at <http://www.montourrr.com>

Welcome New Members

The Montour Trail Council welcomes these new members and thanks them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have recently renewed their membership and to remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.

New Members

Bob Blunkosky
Leslie Bockman
Peggy Brown
Christopher Cahillane
Richards Childs
Jeffrey Creamer
Patricia Gordon
David Grecco
Steven Lesofsky
Thomas Nacey
Lynn Osgood
Christine Rial
James Saulters
Judith Stemmler
Vincent Szellgo

OWL Testing Software
Michael Ulzig
Paul Watters
Bruce & Barbara Weigand
Robert Yetter

Benefactors

Dennis F. Carlin
Barb & Vince Senatore

Leaders

Thomas Levine
Dennis Pfeiffer
Bruce & Barbara Weigand
Valleyview Charitable Foundation

Latest MTC Photo Contest Winner



The winner of the most recent bi-monthly MTC Photo Contest is: Frank Sonnett for his photo "Winter Dusk." Frank snapped this shot while cross country skiing just west of the trail entry point near Evans Field in South Park. The judges had a tough time deciding on this batch of entries but Frank's rose to the top. See all the entries and submit yours at www.montourtrail.org

Congratulations, Frank!

I want to help complete the Montour Trail!

I want to join the Montour Trail Council at this level:

<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior	\$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"/> Leader's Circle	\$500+

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