



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 20 Issue 3

May/June 2009

You Can Help Us Celebrate The Trail's 20th Birthday! Send Us Your Photos and Your Favorite Stories

This year, 2009, marks the 20th year of the beginning and growth of the Montour Trail Council. In celebration, we are having an Anniversary Gala at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott this year on Sunday, November 1, 2009. See our July/August issue for details and to buy tickets.

What we need before then only You can provide... your favorite memories and memorabilia of what the Trail means to you and your history of using the Trail. Did you or your child learn to ride a bike here?... Have you made a special friend here?... (We already know of wedding ceremonies that took place on the Cecil and Airport-area portions of the Trail!)

At our party... and you are most cordially invited to attend... we will be displaying and talking about some of the many personal touches that make the Montour so special. The more pictures, stories, or artifacts you and all users can provide, the better and more meaningful the Party will be.

We will acknowledge your contributions and will ensure that any items you loan to us will be safely returned. Email electronic files to info@montourtrail.org, and send returnable items to the 20th Anniversary Committee, Montour Trail Council, 304 Hickman Street, Suite 3, Bridgeville PA 15017. Thanks!

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Reminder: Let Us Know if You Want the E-Newsletter

With this issue, we're again sending out the newsletter to everyone we can, both electronically and in hard copy. After this, we're going to try to send paper newsletter to those who want the traditional hard copy, and the email newsletter to those who want it electronically. (The electronic edition will be in color!) So, here's what you can do to make sure you get what you want:

- If you did not receive an email notice of the newsletter, we either don't have your email address, or you've already opted out of the email. You needn't do anything further to receive your newsletter in the mail.



- If you do receive the email from us, click on the unsubscribe link near the top of the email to let us know that you don't want future emails.

- If you did not receive an email notice from us, that probably means we don't have your email address. Send us a note at enews@montourtrail.org and

we will get you on the email list for future newsletters.

- If you do receive an email notice from us, please click on the confirm link at the beginning of the message to let us know that you want to keep getting the email.

We want all of you to get the newsletter the way that you want it! You can always change your mind later..

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

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



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Rider's Block

Sometimes when the Trail Letter's article submission deadline is looming, I have a clear idea of what I need to communicate to the over one thousand members of the MTC, and it is just a matter of putting my fingers to the keyboard. Less frequently, I struggle with what I should write about, since most of the real Trail news is covered elsewhere in this publication. Now is one of those less frequent times however, so I'm going to write a bit about "what I plan to do on my summer vacation". It is not Montour Trail related, but it does involve bicycles and at least a few rail-trails.

By the time most of you read this, I will have started on a bicycle adventure crossing the United States, with my new-IUP-graduate son Steve, and a friend Ed. We'll be riding from San Francisco to Yorktown, Virginia, and we'll be using almost the entire months of June and July to complete the trip. I had intended to do this trip in 2003 with my older son Jim before he joined the Navy, but a bicycle-canine collision put me out of commission before that ride ever started. Although I'm sure I haven't trained enough to pound over the Sierras and Rockies, I'm still eagerly looking forward to enjoying the ride.

Our planned itinerary uses well-established Adventure Cycling Association maps with routes on secondary roads, with only a few rail-trails. As I always do when riding on other trails, I will keep my eyes open for new ideas that could be of benefit to our trail. I expect to write my next column while on the road and submit it to Dennis Sims from some internet café along the way, so I can let you all know how it is going.

In the meantime, I leave the MTC in the capable hands of the other officers, board members, and many volunteers who conduct our business on a daily basis. There is plenty to do, and much Montour Trail work being done this year, but I intend to savor the time away.

Passing on your left,

Mark

Saying Thanks

When it comes to community and corporate partners donating services or goods to the Montour Trail, one company that deserves recognition is Waste Management Inc. The dumpsters located at Old Beaver Grade Road, Cliff Mine Road parking area and the Boggs parking area are all provided free by Waste Management, Inc. They have been providing this service as well as emptying them on a weekly basis since the year 2000.

As part of our efforts to "go green", recycle containers have been placed at the Gazebo on Park Manor Drive and at the parking lot at Old Beaver Grade Road. Paul Manfredo, a volunteer with the Airport Area Friends who empties the trash cans along this section of the trail, noticed the large number of plastic bottles that accumulate daily from trail users. He contacted company representative Mike Christ who arranged for the donation of the recyclable containers. These containers are especially needed now that the spring and summer season are upon us.

Thank you to Waste Management Inc. for your continued commitment to the Montour Trail!!!!

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 Mark at 724-941-6351 for more information or to get on the agenda.

Cecil Friends:

Friends of the Trail meeting, every fourth Wednesday 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

Airport Area Friends:

Friends of the Trail meeting, the Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at the Forest Grove Fire Department. Anyone from the communities of Moon, Robinson, North Fayette, and Findlay is encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information. Work and cleanup party, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 a.m. Call 412-262-3748 for more information and location.

Bethel Park Friends:

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:

Meeting second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Jefferson Hills Borough Building. 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

Fort Cherry Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, second Wednesday of the month at McDonald Borough Bldg., Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. Work and cleanup parties, scheduled as needed. For more information, contact Ray Johnston at 724-356-2621.

Peters Township Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Parks and 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@comcast.net.

The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

The newest Friends group. For more information send email to mrhs@montourrr.com.

Pittsburgh Geological Society Field Trip by Dave Oyler

On May 9, the Montour Trail Council hosted over two dozen members of the Pittsburgh Geological Society on their Spring Field Trip led by Albert Kollar of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Traveling along with the group were several members of the Montour Trail Council, Board members Ned Williams and David Oyler, and long time council volunteers Bill Luxner and Ed Taylor. The purpose of the field trip was to investigate the wealth of geology and history associated with the Montour Trail. The Montour Railroad was a product of the industrialization of western Pennsylvania, and

the railroad was built to take advantage of the coal resources laid down approximately 300 million years ago during the Pennsylvanian Period.



The trip began at Fed

Ex Drive at MP4.2 across from Park Manor Blvd (Photo 1), with stops at the Enlow Tunnel, the Peacock cut near MP19, National Tunnel (MP25) and between Greer Tunnel and the Chartiers Creek Bridge (Photo 2, Mr. Kollar kneeling center, Bill Luxner kneeling far left, Ned Williams kneeling far right, Ed Taylor standing far right. Dave Oyler not in photo.). The topics of discussion included the Pennsylvanian glaciation which may have been a major factor in the creation of the thick mineable coal seams present in western



Pennsylvania, a rare fossil amphibian skull found in 2004 by a Pitt student at Fed Ex Drive, the effects of the glaciers of the last million years on the local topography and the routing of the Montour Railroad, and the effects of the local rocks on the Enlow, National and Greer Tunnels. Between stops there was a lively geological discussion along with discussion of the history of the Montour Railroad and Trail, much of the latter led by Ned Williams.

Mr. Kollar and Dr. David Brezinski are currently working on a geologic field guide to the Montour Trail from MP0 to around MP25. When completed, the guide will be available to the public in general and to Montour Trail users in particular. The guide is in keeping with the Montour Trail Council's long range goal of documenting the history of the Montour Railroad.

Trippin' Down the MTC Milestones: Installment #3 By Stan Sattinger

As outlined elsewhere in this issue of the **Trail-Letter**, we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Montour Trail Council in a gala celebration later this year. For now, let's continue recounting more of the key events that have happened along the way toward completion of the Montour Trail.

2000

Quicksilver Bridge installed, August 12. An incredible achievement undertaken by Trail volunteers, coordinated by Jack Peth and past President Dick Quasey. Hired construction services were limited to concrete delivery and hoisting of the bridge span.

Enlow Tunnel illuminated -- a Findlay Township initiative involving the installation of eleven 150-watt sodium light fixtures, greatly increasing the safety of pedestrian and bicyclist trail users alike. Completion ceremonies held August 9 at the Tunnel.

Bethel Park trail section completed with extension to 2.1 miles total length. Celebrated on June 3, the completion of the Bethel section would open the main gateway to the Montour Trail for thousands of South Hills residents.

2001

First Annual "Burgh's Pizza & Wing Pub 10K Run" is held on the Cecil section, April 22. Board member John Hooton introduces the Trail to Pub proprietors Tom, Frank, and Dan Daily, who conclude: "We need to have a fundraiser to get it built!" Year after year the Burgh Race succeeds in raising amounts as large as \$30,000 for the Trail.

Underpinnings of the Trail are stabilized against threatening erosion by the installation of 1,600 tons of rip-rap stone along Montour Run's stream banks. This was a DEP-funded project of the Montour Run Watershed Association.

At last!! Public Utility Commission proceedings governing the disposition of the abandoned Montour Railroad bridges in Washington County are concluded. Of a total of 18 rail-over-highway structures, ten are permitted to remain in place for Trail use. The November decision removes a roadblock that had delayed the start-up of major Trail development projects for years.

2002

Boggs-to-Quicksilver segment opening ceremonies held April 12 at the Allegheny-Washington County border mark the completion of a nearly 18-mile-long continuous stretch of trail from Moon Township to McDonald. Washington County Commissioner J. Bracken Burns sums up the event this way: "It's a great day in Allegheny County, it's a great day in Washington County, and it's a great day on the border!"

Large-to-Clairton segment of the Trail completed in December: 2.4 miles paralleling Peters Creek and skirting the park-and-ride lot at a Mon-Fayette Expressway interchange. *Continues on Page 7*

13th Annual Penny Day Proves to be a Charm by Tim Killmeyer

The Airport Area Friends of the Trail (AAFOTT) held their 13th annual Pennies for YOUR Trail fundraiser on Saturday, May 9 and proved once again how great an asset the public believes the Montour Trail to be. Despite their frustration at moving slowly in miles-long traffic because of the Parkway West closure, motorists sitting at the intersection of Montour Run Road and Park Manor Boulevard dug deep into their wallets, pockets, cupholders, and ashtrays to help fill the collection buckets of the Trail volunteers and the Boy Scouts of Troop 301 who do so much for the Trail.

At the gazebo, trail supporters were bringing in the jars, milk jugs, cigar boxes, etc. of change they had been saving in order to vie for one of the prizes donated by various area businesses. Master-weigher Jerry Bates would record next to each donor's name how many pounds their donation weighed in order to determine the winners (listed below).

In addition, many of the walkers, runners, and bicyclists using the trail that day dropped off baggies of coins or made donations of paper money as their contribution to the upkeep and maintenance of the section of trail they use most often. Preliminary estimates of money collected is \$4,480.03 - final amount to be determined by the sharp-eyed money counters at PNC Bank.

The Airport Area Friends of the Trail would like to thank everyone who donated to the maintenance and upkeep of the Trail with a special thanks to Troop 301 for their help, not only in this fundraising event, but for all their help over the years. If anyone would like to lend a hand on occasion with trail maintenance in the Airport area (Moon Robinson, Findlay, and N. Fayette sections), AAFOTT meets at the Forest Grove VFD on the Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 p.m. to plan work parties. Call: 412-859-3020 for more information.

Prize winners were: **Overnight stay at the Airport Marriott:** Clare Druga of Findlay Twp. with 18.5 pounds of coins. **4 Pirate Tickets:** Jerry MacFarland of Moon Twp. with 14 pounds. **Overnight stay at Days Inn:** Kevin M. Cooney of Moon Twp. with 13.6 pounds. **\$25 gift Certificate at the Bronze Hood Lounge:** Karen Ford of Neville Island with 12.6 pounds. **1 Free Dinner at iHop:** Ed Jaros of Kennedy Twp. with 4.1 pounds.



Boy Scout Joey Lueck accepts a donation from a passing motorist.

9th Running of Burgh's 10K Plus New 5K Equals Great Fun for the Trail! by John Hooton

Combine a beautiful day, 600 walkers, runners and race supporters at Cecil Park and you have a great way to fundraise for our Montour Trail. (See inset for men and women placers in each race.)

Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub of Bridgeville has been a wonderful source of joy and enthusiasm for our Trail since 2001. Their local eatery has raised well over \$140,000 for us in those years, yet Tom Daily, one of the owner-brothers says, "Now by adding the 5K, we can build on that!"

Let's look behind the scenes to find what has to take place to make the Burgh's Run fun AND safe. We offer thanks not only to the Daily brothers who sponsor, finance the race and provision us with an excellent comfort food lunch. Let us also be reminded of the gangs of volunteers who register the runners and bike pace them to assure a clear path, offer water en route and finally others who time the finishers and report results to our website link.

This year we want to highlight our Cecil Police bike patrollers Patrolman Guy Kuzak and Sergeant Brian Douglass in their up-to-the-minute bike and uniform equipment. Their presence here reminds us that they frequently "sweep" the Trail to add to its safety and security.



Twilight Trail Walk

On Friday, July 31 from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., The Friends of the Montour Trail in Peters Township will be hosting the Twilight Trail Walk along Arrowhead Trail. Once again this year we will have 2 starting locations: Farmhouse Coffee/My Big Fat Greek Gyro located at 502 Valleybrook Road, and St. Petersburg Center located at 210 Valleybrook Road, McMurray, PA 15317. For a \$5.00 donation, participants can walk along the luminaria-lit trail. Participants will also receive a glow necklace to light their way, and an entry into a raffle for great prizes from local businesses. Participants are encouraged to bring a chair and stay for the refreshments and the entertainment that is planned. Children under 5 and pets are free. Registration will be at the event. In the event of a downpour, the walk will be rescheduled to Saturday, August 1. All proceeds will benefit maintenance and expansion of the Montour Trail in Peters Township. Contact sueheadley@comcast.net or call 412-835-3011 for additional information.

Burgh Race Results

Men 5K

PLACE	FINISHER	AGE	CITY	TIME
1	Mark Lydon	39	Pittsburgh	19:29
2	S. Mark Courtney	53	Grove City	19:30
3	Will Cusick	14		19:41

Women 5K

1	Andrea Moore	33	Verona	22:52
2	Rachel Miller	35	McMurray	23:17
3	Anya Ryjkova	28	Pittsburgh	24:13

Men 10K

1	Steven Strelick	26	Allison Park	35:36
2	Richard Crowley	34	Canonsburg	36:21
3	Ryan Erdely	38	Washington	36:42

Women 10K

1	Mindy Sawtelle	36	Indiana	37:47
2	Beth Shutt	29	Natrona Heights	41:52
3	Michelle Corkum	24	McMurray	43:33

results courtesy of The Runners High, www.runhigh.com

As our Trail matures, more and more prep work falls to our volunteers to have the Trail be "race ready". The National Tunnel was paved with asphalt last summer, and this year, the entire five-mile Trail surface from Routes 980/50 back east to Hendersonville was dragged and widened to remove Nature's intrusion of weeds and ruts. We also rented a telescoping fork-lift modified by Frank Ludwin, to clean the loose rock that had collected over the years and was beginning to fall to the Trail from above both tunnel portals. (How much better than to have volunteers scaling its 30 foot heights!)

It is true that the better the job that everyone does to staff the race, the less we are aware of their work when we attend it. (Kind of the like the bromide of going to a good dentist-"Who's to notice?") Join us in looking forward to next year and the 10th Burgh's 5 and 10K and 2 Mile Walk. See you there!

A Venetian Stairway Update



Ned Williams is leading the construction of the stairway at PA 50 and 980 (Mucks Lunch) to reduce the detour while we await the replacement of the bridge. Ed Strnisa (in black), the owner of Ed Strnisa Cement Contracting, volunteered to assist in the placement and finishing of the concrete landing in early May. Assisting in the project to Ed's right is Keith Williams, and to his left is Ed Zupanic, Roger McIlheny and Rich Blaskiewicz. Not pictured is the photographer, Ned Williams. Sometime this summer, the steps with a parallel ramp to push your bike up to the bridge should be completed.

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY BY BOB CIMINEL

When the Champion Coal Washer was Considered State-of-the Art Technology

In 1929, the United States Bureau of Mines published a bulletin titled "Coal-Washing Investigations: Methods and Tests." A section of the bulletin described the newly-built coal washer at Champion that was constructed by the Pittsburgh Coal Company on the main line of its subsidiary, the Montour Railroad, in 1928. What follows is a synopsis of the report describing the features of the new coal washer. The plant as originally designed could process 13,000 tons of run-of-mine coal (i.e. dirty coal straight from the mines) per day using two 10-hour shifts. According to the bulletin, "[the plant is admirably situated for the receipt of mine-run coal, the dispatch of washed coal, and the dumping of waste. The steel and concrete construction is of the best design.]"



Coal was received from five mines on the Montour Railroad, the farthest being 19 miles away (Trail milepost 30, Montour No. 4 mine). The car dumper could handle about 20 cars per hour. Coal was dumped onto a 60-inch belt where it passed under a magnet to remove metal debris. Coal dust was blown away using a fan and sent to the boilers for steam production.

The coal was washed using a closed water system (meaning it was re-processed), with makeup water supplied by the McDonald Water Company from a reservoir about three miles west of the plant and stored in a 200,000 gallon tank on the hill above the plant. The McDonald Reservoir predated the coal washer as shown on this 1906 topographical map.

(Map courtesy of MapTech: As a special service to the mapping community, MyTopo/Maptech is proud to host this collection of historic USGS topographic maps. This ongoing project

is headed by historian Christopher Marshall and compiled through the efforts of many individuals. We are honored to be the stewards of this fine collection, making it available to all via the World Wide Web.)



The plant received its electrical power from the West Penn Power Company, which also provided electricity to the coal company's mines along the Montour. Voltage was provided at 440, 220, and 110 to the plant's 130 motors ranging in size from 1 to 150 horsepower. There was a 1,000-kilovolt-ampere synchronous condenser for power-factor correction. This was needed because, with large motors, the voltage and current can get out of phase, causing the motors to run excessively hot. The plant used about 1.13 kilowatts for each ton of raw coal it processed. The photo to the left shows the Champion Coal Washer as it existed in 1945.

(Photo courtesy Historic Pittsburgh Image Collections: Use of the Historic Pittsburgh Image Collections are expressly allowed for *non-commercial, personal, or research use only*. Transmission or reproduction of protected items beyond what is allowed by fair use will require the written permission of copyright owners.)

As users of the Montour Trail, you may tend to forget that the vacant area east of Milepost 12 was once the location of one of the largest coal cleaning operations in the United States, served entirely by rail, and provided a significant tonnage of the coal used to win World War II.

©2009 Bob Ciminell
Roswell, GA

Bob Ciminell is the founder of the Montour Railroad Yahoo group http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/. There are currently 263 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.

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

Wayne Balta
Jeff & Tammi Blackburn
Kent Carter
David Diller
James Gordish
Robert Henninger
Karen Hjerpe
Kurt Kearcher
Valerie Kramer & Tom Brooks
Charles Lawton
Dean Leech
Laura Leonard
Malcolm McDonald
Kara Pesavento
Don Senchak

Rebecca Shuster
Stemplewski Software
Erica & Joseph Stracci
James Szarnicki
Daniel Wagner
Dale Yessler
Robert Zoppetti

Benefactors

Pete Grondziowski
Daniel J. Hirsh
Jim Marmack

Leader's Circle

Wayne Balta

Trippin' continues from page 4

2003

Montour Trail TrestleFest dedicates the largest Trail segment completed to date -- the five miles extending from McDonald to Venice, including the 970-foot-long McDonald Viaduct -- a \$1,769,000 contract completed by Atlas Construction in September. This addition would extend the Trail's longest continuous section to 22.3 miles of length.

First Annual "Tour the Montour" bike ride held September 27. This event provides various options for organized rides and walks entirely on the Montour Trail, and it nets the Trail Council increasing amounts of revenue approaching \$10,000 per year.

Farewell to past President Dick Quasey: one of the MTC's most esteemed leaders is lost with Dick's passing on September 4. He is greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing and working with him. His leadership qualities were especially valued when leading the way on some very special construction projects involving bridges.

Join us in the next issue of the Trail-Letter for the final installment of our trip over the MTC's milestones.

Board Meeting Change of Date

The Montour Trail Council Board Meeting scheduled for Monday, June 15 has been changed to Monday, June 22. Meeting will still convene at 6:00 p.m. and will still be held at the Montour Trail Council office in Bridgeville.

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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Don't Forget

The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice as option #3308, or Combined Federal Campaign Contributor Choice option #19345 where you work.



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Save this VERY SPECIAL Date !

Montour Trail Council's 20th Anniversary Celebration



**Twentieth Anniversary Gala
Sunday Evening, November 1, 2009
at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott Hotel**

Plan now to attend and renew your old Montour Trail acquaintances
as we thank our supporters and benefactors for their past contributions
and project the Trail's future fortunes

Happy Hour at 5:00 pm preceding Sit Down Dinner

After Dinner Program with Master of Ceremonies Bill Flanagan

Musical Entertainment by the NewLanders

Tickets on sale in the July/August issue of the Montour Trail-Letter