



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

# MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 24 Issue 3

May-June 2013

## Another Trail Section Completed, Photos and story by Dave Oyler

Volunteers completed installing the remaining high tensile wire fencing (the two long runs up the Triphammer Ramp). The chain was removed at Triphammer Road and at 1:49 p.m, Saturday, May 4, the writer removed the last barriers at Piney Fork Road. Phase 8E2/8 is now completely open to trail users. We still need trail signs, but the trail itself is open for business.



Left, The Triphammer parking area looking towards the Piney Fork Bridge.



Right, The Piney Fork Ramp provides trail users access from the former Montour Railroad right of way to Piney Fork Road (photo at MP39.0).

## PennDot Unveils 980/50 Plans by Dennis Sims

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The drawing of the new intersection with the trail bridge.

For 20 years, the Cecil section of the Montour Trail between PA Route 980 and Morganza Road had been an island waiting for bridges to connect to other parts of the Trail. Last year, one of those connections was completed at Hendersonville. There is still a remaining connection to complete, the bridge over the intersection of PA 980 and PA 50 in the village of Venice. The construction of this bridge is dependent on the realignment of the intersection into a conventional crossroad.

On Thursday, March 28, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, District 12, held a public meeting at the Cecil Township Municipal Building to unveil their

plans to reconstruct this intersection and to construct a trail bridge over the recreated intersection. The plans for this project have been in the works for years since the old railroad bridge was removed in 2001. With the increase in traffic, much of it in response to the Marcellus Gas play, PennDot feels this project needs to be completed soon. If everything goes to plan, it will be put out to bid during the winter of 2015 with construction to commence the following spring. When complete, the intersection will be a crossroad controlled with a 4-way stop and the trail will have a new three span bridge that will fill this gap and complete the Cecil section between MP 20.7 and 28.5.

Of course while the construction is underway, trail users will once again need to use Route 50 for a short time while the bridge is constructed. The steps will have to be removed and the span that they climb through will be raised to meet the two new constructed spans.

Visit the Montour Trail Web Site at:  
[www.montourtrail.org](http://www.montourtrail.org)

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



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## The Prez Sez

I extend greetings to the members, friends and supporters of the Montour Trail. We are very appreciative of your support of the Montour Trail. Please let us know how we may better serve you, the organization and/or the general trail using public. Please send any comments, ideas or suggestion to our attention at the office, or via email to [MTCoffice@montourtrail.org](mailto:MTCoffice@montourtrail.org). Our Administrative Manager, Phyllis McChesney, who fields these communications, does an excellent job in moving suggestions to the best manager or committee.

Most of the Montour Trail projects receive their birth in the MTC Engineering & Construction (E&C) committee. The MTC is very fortunate to have some very dedicated volunteers with professional engineering experience. These individuals devote an enormous amount of time to planning, planning and then more planning.

Speaking of planning, I went back to the earliest E&C meeting minutes (11/15/2001) that I could find. In that meeting, we were discussing the transfer of the design and engineering contract of the 506-foot long Library Viaduct to another firm. The transfer was necessitated due to our first engineering firm going out of business. There were many complications to this project over the years, but finally MTC project managers Tom Prezel and Paul McKeown have engaged a third engineering firm WEC to prepare the Library Viaduct project for a fall or spring 2014 bid.

Please lend your support to this long planned Montour Trail project. Many of us who have been attending those E&C meetings over the years will be very happy to finally see the Library Viaduct move from the planning to the construction stage.

Speaking of construction, the MTC as you know has two major construction projects well underway with the Valleybrook #1 bridge (Project Manager Mark Imgrund) and the 8/10<sup>th</sup> mile Triphammer Road to Piney Fork Road trail and two bridges (Project Manager Dave Oyler). These projects will be nearing completion soon, so please watch for announcements on their ribbon cuttings and more information in the next newsletter.

Finally, on May 1, 2013, Ned Williams (MTC Government Envoy) and I conducted a progress meeting with **Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Allegheny County Special Projects Coordinator Darla Cravotta**. We were very thankful of them being able to allocate ½ hour of their precious time. In that short time, we were able to present the twenty year history of the opened trail in Allegheny County. We also discussed the new exciting developments with the Triphammer Road construction and the future Library Viaduct project. In addition, we mentioned the MTC's two April, 2013 requests into DCNR for funding the Coraopolis extension and an extension in South Park Township from the Library Viaduct to Pleasant Street.

One of the biggest hits in the meeting was a laminated 24" by 36" Bill Metzger trail map. It was a great tool when explaining the vast "spread out" Montour mileage. It was such a hit that Mr. Fitzgerald suggested a photo with the map. The map was then proudly donated to Allegheny County, and Mr. Fitzgerald suggested hanging the map in a prominent place. (Bill Metzger, thanks for the map, it was greatly appreciated.)

(Please see photos from the 5/1/2012 Allegheny County Executive meeting and the 2/21/2013 meeting with the Washington County Commissioners on page 3. )

Happy Trails,  
Dennis Pfeiffer

## 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.

### 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

### Airport Area Friends: (MP 0 to MP 2.6 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.

**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

### Fort Cherry Friends: (MP 12.6 to MP 20.7)

Friends of the Trail Meeting, second Wednesday of the month at McDonald Borough Building, 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: (MP 28.5 to 30.4, Library Jct to nar MP 35 and part of the Bethel Branch)

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:

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

## Twilight Trail Walk

On Friday, July 26 from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., The Friends of the Montour Trail in Peters Township will be hosting a 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 \$7.00 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 music. Children under 5 and pets are free. **Registration will be at the event only.** All proceeds will benefit maintenance and expansion of the Montour Trail in Peters Township. Contact [sueheadley@comcast.net](mailto:sueheadley@comcast.net) or call 412-835-3011 for additional information or check the events section at [www.montourtrail.org](http://www.montourtrail.org).



*Allegheny County Montour Trail Progress meeting on May 1, 2013. Left to right, Dennis Pfeiffer, Rich Fitzgerald and Ned Williams*



*Washington County Commissioners Montour Trail Progress meeting on February 21, 2013 Left to right - Dennis Pfeiffer, Diana Irely Vaughn, Harlan Shober, Larry Maggi and Ned Williams*



## Earth Day Cleanup

Volunteers from the Kurt J. Lesker Company® participated in an Earth Day Clean-Up event on Monday, April 22. The volunteers removed garbage from the Clairton section of the Montour Trail, the Park N' Ride lot, and from the grounds of all three KJLC® buildings. We are thrilled to announce the total weight of garbage collected was 1,125 lbs. This project was a part of the company's Corporate Sustainability Program, which encourages employees to make regular contributions throughout the year to improve our community.



## MRHS Commemorates 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by Bryan Seip

The largest construction project on the Montour Railroad began 100 years ago, in 1913, as the road was extended from North Star (Trail mile 9.7) to Bethel Park, adding over 30 miles to the original railroad and opening service to many new coal mines and businesses in 1914. The Montour Railroad Historical Society is commemorating this anniversary with several interpretive signs and railroad artifacts along this old route.



*A cyclist pauses to check out the interpretive sign at North Star Junction.*

The first sign was installed April 27 at North Star Junction. MRHS plans to add additional signs, about once a month at various locations along the Trail.

The second sign will be installed at the end of the trail, near Logan Road in Bethel Park, the last point the

Montour Trail reaches on the old Montour RR main line. As each of the signs is unveiled, MRHS will set up historical displays, provide explanations and answer any questions from Trail patrons.

MRHS is also rehabbing several original railroad mileposts. Those completed can be seen at RR MP 30, 31 and 32, (Trail miles 28, 29 & 30). Trail mile posts differ by up to 2 miles due to a different starting point and by realignments on the original railroad which shortened its distance. Original railroad mileposts completed on the Bethel Branch are at MP 38 & 39 (Bethel 0.1 & 1.1)

## Volunteer feature: Roger McElhaney

A string of pearls loses value if one is damaged, and the Montour Trail would lose significant value if any section were allowed to deteriorate. Our most rural segment (miles 12 to 21) could pose the greatest risk, but a small group of Fort Cherry Friends led by Ray Johnston has kept these miles—which include our longest bridge structure, the McDonald Viaduct—in excellent shape.



*Roger surveying the scene at the Robinson Run Bridge prior to the deck placement*

For over a decade Roger McElhaney has been among the most productive of our Fort Cherry Friends. In fact, he pushes so hard that he once was branded a slavedriver.

Roger was working on reconstruction of the Robinson Run bridge, which enables Montour Trail users to connect to the Panhandle Trail in McDonald. "We were pulling out three old railroad ties at a time from the bridge," Roger explained, "and attaching them by cable to a tractor that was dragging them away.

We had nine left when someone said it was time to quit. I said, 'Why bring the tractor back another time?' They said I was a slavedriver, but we got the work done."

That's the work ethic you get every day from Roger, a 1955 McDonald High School graduate who worked 41 years for Cameron Coca-Cola in McDonald and Washington until his retirement in 1999.

Roger began his Montour Trail Council volunteer career by redirecting traffic with his wife, Virginia, during installation of the Quicksilver Bridge in 2000. Virginia died the following year, but Roger continued volunteering. He was also involved with restoration of the McDonald train station, which reopened as a historical and community center in 2003. "I helped with the insulation and roofing, so everything I did got covered up," he quipped.

Along with participating in regular Fort Cherry maintenance activities, Roger has played a major role in several important trail construction projects. He spent so much time on the temporary scaffolding underneath the Robinson Run bridge that, when the job was complete, construction leader Jack Peth handed Roger a wrench, saying that he should have the honor of disassembling the scaffold. Roger worked four full days on the steps and bike guiderail used to access the trail at Muck's Lunch, on the north side of route 50. Although he doubts that any construction company would hire him, Roger enjoyed operating the roller and tractor during resurfacing of Fort Cherry trail mileage, during which he came to appreciate Frank Ludwin's project leadership. "With Frank Ludwin in charge, you always get an hour for lunch," he said.

Roger also appreciates the varied ways in which users say thank you. One day, he recalled, a maintenance crew working near Boggs found bags of pretzels in one of their trucks. It turned out that a pretzel delivery driver was taking bike rides on the trail. From then on, "if he saw us working he would stop and offer us pretzels," Roger said. "We were supplied for nearly the whole summer."

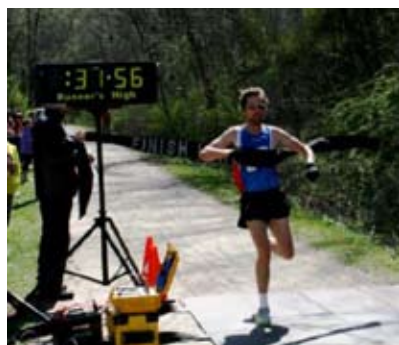
*(continues on page 5)*

## The 13th Burgh's Pizza and Wings 5K, 10K and 2 Mile Family Fun Walk

photos by Ned Williams

PLACE	FINISHER	TIME
5K		
Open Men		
1	Alphonsus Suravicz, 30, Pittsburgh, PA	17:11
2	Ryan Barlow, 23, Zelienople, PA	17:50
3	Josh Pusateri, 16, Washington, PA	18:00
Open Women		
1	Autumn Greba, 19, North Huntingdon, PA	18:48
2	Tammy Williams, 38, McMurray, PA	21:19
3	Tina Seech, 51, Pittsburgh, PA	21:40
10K		
Open Men		
1	Josh Simpson, 29, Morgantown, WV	31:56
2	Trent Binford-walsh, 24, Pittsburgh, PA	32:40
3	Dayton McVicker, 20, Morgantown, WV	32:43
Open Women		
1	Mandy West, 36, McMurray, PA	38:13
2	Michelle Corkum, 28, Pittsburgh, PA	39:29
3	Erica Maloney, 31, Verona, PA	39:43

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Burgh's Pizza and Wings 5K, 10K and 2 Mile Family Fun Walk was far from unlucky. The morning started off sunny and frosty, but the participants swarmed Cecil Park on that Sunday morning breaking a record just set last year. The 2012 event brought out 725 participants and this event saw 990 runners and walkers join in the fun. There were 507 finishers for the 5K and 379 for the 10K. For some, one race was not enough, and 103 chose to run in both races. Thanks to [www.runhigh.com](http://www.runhigh.com) for race timing and posting the results on their website which have been condensed to the top 3 men and women for the races. Goto the web site for a complete list of finishers.



Left, Josh Simpson crosses the finishes line to win the 10K.



Congratulations to Cathy Paylo (above), winner of our online registration drawing of a 32" Flat Screen LCD TV donated by Bridgeville Appliance

Right, Mandy West leading the women across the finish line in the 10K.



As always, there was plenty to eat and drink after the event with wings, pasta and hoagies topping the menu, and there are plenty of liquid refreshments to wash it down with. We hope to see you next year for the 14th running of the Burgh and remember - this event helps support the Montour Trail.

### Trail Volunteer Continues from page 4

Living within half a mile of the Montour-Panhandle intersection, Roger is an avid trail user too. He has participated in every Tour the Montour ride since the event's inception and surprised some friends by keeping up with them on a round trip to Peters Township.

Roger also volunteers for Meals on Wheels and at a local food bank. As befits his priorities, when asked what he most wanted to express about the trail he had one comment: "If you want to volunteer, we can use you."



Left: The Burgh Owners and Dad mug it up for the camera. From left to right, Tom, Frank Sr., Frank Jr. and Dan Daily



## MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

## Montour Railroad's Little Brother: The Pittsburgh & Moon Run Railroad (Bob Ciminel ©2013)

Organized in 1891 and operational in 1893, the Pittsburgh & Moon Run Railroad (P&MR) was financed by the Moon Run Coal Company to service its new mine in Moon Run, located near today's Route 60, west of the I-79 interchange. The line originated in Groveton, east of Montour Junction, on the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad (now CSX).

The P&MR began operation with one locomotive, one passenger car and six gondolas for hauling coal. Beside the Moon Run Mine, other stations along the track were used primarily for shipping farm products, although several small coal mines also operated along the right-of-way over the years.



As with most railroads organized in the 1800s, offering passenger service was a necessity to acquire a state franchise and as an incentive to property owners whose land the railroad needed. The P&MR was no different. Passenger service was offered between Pittsburgh and Moon Run on a daily except Sunday basis with six trains per day. The first train of the day departed Moon Run at 5:53 a.m., arriving in Pittsburgh at the P&LE station (Station Square) at 6:45 a.m. The last train of the day left Pittsburgh at 3:30 p.m., arriving in Moon Run at 4:15 p.m.

In 1899, with the formation of the Pittsburgh Coal Company, both the Montour Railroad and the P&MR became subsidiaries of the Coal Company, along with the Moon Run Mine, which eventually became a major coal mining operation.

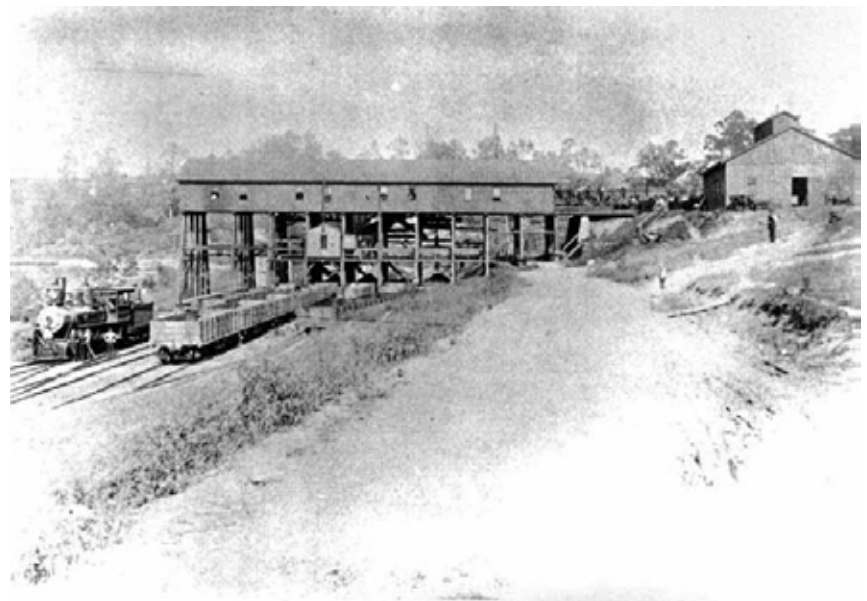
In 1912, the Montour Railroad merged the P&MR, which continued operating as a subsidiary. The P&MR was a going concern until 1936 when its last customer, the Moon Run Mine, closed. The P&MR was abandoned three year later.

Little remains of the P&MR; however, remnants of the Moon Run Mine can still be seen in the form of waste dumps and scrap from the old tipple along McKees Rocks Road in Moon where many of the former miners' house still exist. Portions of the southbound lanes of I-79 are located on the former P&MR right-of-way on the big "S" curve south of the Ohio River.

Some of the early stations going up the line, which were often named after the landowner who granted the right-of-way to the railroad, were Verner, Forrest Grove, Ficht, Debold, Clevers and Aiken. These former stations gave their names, sometimes with different spelling, to Verner Road, Forest Grove Road, Diebold Road, Clever Road and Aiken Road.

Handling coal trains on the P&MR was a challenge for engineers, conductors and brakemen because the railroad rose 350 feet from the river to the Moon Run Mine, a grade of 70 feet per mile, or about 1.7%, and runaway trains were a constant danger.

So, each time you complain about those nasty curves on I-79, remember that the P&MR had to negotiate those same curves every day for over 40 years.



Bob Ciminel is the founder of the Montour Railroad Yahoo group [http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour\\_rr/](http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/) There are currently 328 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

John & Renee Bennett  
Kevin Brewer  
Mary Beth Crawford  
Frank & Yvonne Dwyer  
Roger Fausold  
The Ford Family  
Belinda L. Hall  
Charlie Johns  
Dennis Joyce  
Janie K. Minor  
Jacques Rhodes  
S. Round  
Chuck Setler  
Eric Sipple

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Rolf Otterness  
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Ronald Piroli  
Andrew & Ming Tung

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Don & Shelly Fink  
Roger Hindenlang & Susan Uram  
Kurt J. Lesker Company  
Thomas Levine

In memory of O. Ward Sutton  
Nancy Vaughan

In memory of Charles L. Werme  
Betty Werme

In memory of Steven Trace Allen  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim DiMaria

In memory of George Deitt  
James A. Deitt

Donations were received for the **Marshall Fausold Memorial Fund** from  
Sharon Newman  
Roger Fausold

## Trail Tidbits

The second Pittsburgh Cycling Expo was held on April 7, 2013. The event was a great success with over 700 in attendance and 75 vendors participating in the event. The MTC Board appreciates Cathy Rogers, Steve Ewing and the staff at Aerotech Designs for underwriting the event and the generous support of the trail and cycling in Pittsburgh.

Berenice and John Hooton, Hendersonville Trail gardeners, need bottles! Seriously, help us collect interesting bottles of any size, shape and color to display in a Trail garden.

Artist Dale Chihuly ([www.chihuly.com](http://www.chihuly.com)) made a fortune in colored glass, see Phipps Conservatory or even Las Vegas at the Bellagio. Maybe your bottles will draw crowds and help promote the Trail.

Call John at 724-942-0115 for more information and where you can deliver your bottles. Let us hear from you!  
Thanks

## 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
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Don't Forget

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## **The Bicycle Nuisance**

**by Tim Killmeyer**

Those of us who become known as “that Trail guy” or “that Trail woman” regularly field complaints from bicyclists who are irritated by people walking who take up the whole trail and don’t hear warnings that they are about to be passed, as well as from walkers and runners who complain about those “darn” bicyclists who take up the whole trail, riding double or triple abreast as they pass and not giving any audible warning when they do. The interesting thing is that those complaints are nothing new but are actually over 125 years old! The woman in the woodcut above (from 1876) says to her husband: “Charles, do ask them which side they expect ME to go!”

That’s why the Montour Trail rules are so important - Keep to the Right; Warn before Passing; and the general courtesy: Pass Single File (from either direction). Those rules help keep a day on the Trail safe and FUN for everyone!