



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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November-December 2015

There Are Now 36 Miles Of Continuous Trail

With the completion of the 980-50 flyover in Cecil Township and the Valleybrook #2 Bridge, a trail patron can ride uninterrupted from PA Route 51 in Coraopolis to PA Route 88 in Library, Yes, there area a few road crossings to contend with, but it beats having to ride on roads with traffic.

After a soft opening a few days before, the ribbon was cut on VB#2 in Peters Township on Saturday, October 3. Linking the two Peters Township sections. After a cloudy, rainy morning moved the opening speeches into Tom Robinson's party room, the celebrants walked to the bridge to cut the ribbon, and as a fitting tribute, the sun appeared. Thank you Tom for use of your party room for the reception and for providing space for parking and a trail detour while construction was occurring.

A little more than a month later, there was a gathering 8 miles to the west in Cecil Township on Veterans Day afternoon. The ribbon was cut on the long-awaited flyover that takes the Trail over the busy reconstructed 980/50 intersection. CH&D Enterprises was working right up to the ribbon cutting doing cleanup work. Like VB#2, it finally connected sections in Cecil.

Pictures of the completed bridges can be see on page 8.



Cutting the ribbon at 980-50: James Foringer, Assistant District Executive for Construction PennDot District 11-0; Heath Younkin, President CH&D Enterprises; James Sisul, Project Manager, PennDot District 12-0; Ned Williams, MTC President; Jason Ortlay, Pa Representative 46th District; Camera Bartolotta, Pa Senator 46th District; Andy Schrader, Cecil Twp. Supervisor; Leann Chaney, Transportation Planner Southwest Pennsylvania Commission;; Jonathon Balko, Project Manager Markosky Engineering; Dennis Sims, Cecil Friends of the Montour Trail President; Mary Shaw, Shaw-Weil Associates; Bill Capp, MTC maintenance leader.. Photo by Tom Prezel.

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Jessie Piazza (right) was chosen to be the first official rider across the bridge. She asked the contractor if she could be the first to ride across the bridge at the opening. Photo by Dennis Sims



Cutting the ribbon Valley Brook #2

Roy Weil, Trail Volunteer Fund
Mary Shaw, Trail Volunteer Fund
Ned Williams, MTC President
Diana Irey Vaughan, Washington County Commissioner
Tim Murphy, U.S. Representative, 18th District
Brittany Smith, Peters Parks and Recreation Board
David Ball, Peters Township Council Chairman
Greg Gold, Chairman, Peters Township Chamber of Commerce
Tom Daily, Burgh's Pizza and Wings
Mark Imgrund, Peters Friends President & VB#2 Project Manager
Photo by Dave Borrebach

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 Closing Up for Winter

This has been an extraordinary year for trail bridge openings on the Montour: Library Viaduct, Valley Brook #2, the Venice Bridge. But, to everything there is a season. Winter will soon turn upon us and it will bring with it a trail closing: the annual winter shuttering of the National Tunnel.

The National Tunnel will be closed from about mid-December to mid-March. The exact dates are of course dependent on the weather, and will be announced. An on-road winter detour route will be posted. The tunnel is located at MP 25, two miles west of Hendersonville.



we have all seen, during the more severe winters ice forms in the tunnel from wall-to-wall several feet high, and large columns extend to the ceiling. The surface of the ice is steeply sloped, wet with dripping water, and extremely slippery. This is not the type of family friendly travel and recreational facility that our trail users have come to expect us to provide.

To minimize the inconvenience to the trail using public, the Montour organization will be disseminating as widely as possible the notice of the National Tunnel winter closure. The idea is to create the *expectation* that this will occur every year, so that trail users can plan accordingly. We will endeavor to make the campaign effective, so as to lessen any unpleasant trailside surprises.

However, it is regrettable that the Montour, which is the longest suburban rail trail in the US, will be cut in half at its center. This cut is in the middle of the just-completed Washington County section, between the two recently opened bridges at Valley Brook #2 and Venice. After all, this is not a remote mountaintop in Somerset County where there's very little local trail traffic impacted by the annual Big Savage Tunnel closure. Montour is right in the thick of Pittsburgh's suburbs, with very heavy local usage, including many who enjoy those magically beautiful nicer days in the winter.

We recently had an initial discussion with a couple of consultants whose expertise is in tunnel lining systems. They shared some preliminary ideas, which if implemented might provide a permanent solution to the water and ice problem, and allow the tunnel to remain open year round. Their ideas would constitute a long term fix, likely to require significant funds, the raising of which has yet to be planned for. All of our many friends and partners know we are no stranger to overcoming significant structural obstacles. Thus there is reason to be optimistic that in time we can take care of this one.

For now, I am happy to say that a short term partial fix is at hand. Montour's Engineering and Construction Committee has spent much time and effort this year investigating a variety of interim solutions. Taking the bull by the horns, trail maintenance lead and chief carpenter Bill Capp has drawn up a plan that appears to be relatively cost effective and able to be constructed by volunteers. **Continues of page 3**

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 the Montour Trail Office 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.

Enlow Tunnel Gets New Interpretive Sign

Three new historical interpretive signs have recently been installed along the trail by the Montour Railroad Historical Society.

The first was installed at the Lotus Bridge display in Peters Township at trail mile 30, to go along with the reconstructed display of the old bridge. The display includes a cut-away section of ties to showcase the construction of this bridge, which also typifies construction of many of the larger deck plate girder bridges on the railroad/trail.

Another sign was planted outside the eastern portal of the Enlow Tunnel at mile 7.2 in Findlay Township. Enlow was the last tunnel to be bored on the railroad and is the only one with a straight bore.

A third sign was recently installed at the new Venice Bridge over Routes 50 & 980. Trail users may remember a sign previously displayed at this location. This new one is basically an update to reflect the completion of the new flyover bridge at mile 22.

MRHS is working on several other signs and displays denoting the history of the Montour Railroad planned for future installation along the Montour Trail.



Prez Sez continues from page 2

Both west and east tunnel portals will be completely covered with plywood panels, to keep the cold wind out. The system will be akin to a lighter-duty version of the wood panels used in concrete formwork. The idea is that trapping the slightly warmer air in the tunnel will greatly reduce ice formation, thus allowing it to be opened significantly earlier than the late April date of recent years.

There's little question that the large crowds of springtime trail users, drawn out by the nearby bridge completions, will be better served by an earlier tunnel opening. This is a great example of Montour's focus on providing the best possible trail system, even in the face of difficulties. Thank you all for working with us, and for your support.

Have a great late Fall and Holiday season!

Ned Williams

RIP Ned's Treads

"Ned's Treads" allowed trail users to transition between the bridge over Millers Run in Venice to the Route 50/980 intersection. The stairs allowed trail users to avoid a sometimes challenging detour along Route 50.

Ned Williams (now MTC President) designed the stairs and led a large cast of volunteers during their fabrication and construction.

Ned detailed the assistance he received and the obstacles he and the crew overcame in the Nov-Dec, 2009 issue of the *Montour Trail-Letter*. You can read the issue on line at the trail's website: <http://www.montourtrail.org/news/2009/novdec2009.pdf>



Picture: Ned Williams in front of Ned's Treads, already partially removed for bridge construction.

At the time of design and construction, it wasn't clear when PennDOT's realignment of the Route 50/980 intersection would occur. As a result, the steps were built to last. Ned designed them with an eye to convenience and detail.

The unique tire-width channel allowed bicyclists to walk with their bikes without having the bike bump along from step to step. In the picture notice how the washers all echo the diamond shape of the Montour Trail logo.

As it turned out, the stairs were only needed for 5 years. They had served their purpose: we removed the Route 50 detour, and we announced to all that the Montour Trail was coming across the intersection on a permanent basis.

Whatta Morning!

The winner of this newsletter's bi-monthly MTC Photo Contest is Jennifer D'Amico who captured this great shot before exiting the Enlow Tunnel near Mile 7.5 during a mid-September run. Congratulations, Jennifer - your thousands of pennies worth of Montour Trail paraphernalia should be on its way soon! We are now accepting photos for the next newsletter contest and if you would like to enter or see what other people have submitted, just go to www.montourtrail.org and click on the links below the scrolling pictures. Good luck!

The Latest Trail Patrol Recruits



Jesse Forquer introduces two more Trail Patrols. Top, Wesley Attwood of Peters Township and at the bottom Walter Prescott of South Park Township.



13th Annual Tour the Montour

Who Says 13 Is an Unlucky Number?

By Sam Hvifelt, Race Director

We certainly don't! Saturday, September 26th, 2015 was a magnificent day for our 13th Tour with perfect *weather conditions for an autumn bike ride!*

No wonder 530 riders turned out to ride - some of whom travelled from as far away as California! The age range of our riders continues to impress – from 2 years old to 86 years young! Matt Casebeer earned the top spot for the men and fan favorite Teresa Gallagher raced to first place for the women in the King/Queen of the Mountain challenge! Both Matt and Teresa undoubtedly have their awesome trophy on ready display – and both will be seen sporting their commemorative red-dot jerseys, reminding others of their unsurpassed climbing skills.

As usual, the Lunch at Brothers Grimm at the 2015 Tour did not disappoint – plenty of full tummies and happy faces at the end of the event! Our sponsors Brothers Grimm, The Oakdale Diner, Mediterra Bakehouse, Eat 'n Park and Anthony's Original Wholesale Produce kept everyone's energy levels up with their fresh and tasty food. Steve Taylor from Brothers Grimm and his staff kept the food coming, hot and ready, right up to the last rider.

In addition to our fun and interesting gifts drawn by every rider at lunch, we had some amazing Trail fundraiser raffle options this year. Pro Bikes LLC generously donated a 2015 Giant Escape bicycle – Rhea Haas was the lucky winner. The Tandem Connection graciously donated a 2015 Fuji Absolute 1.3 bicycle – Betty Helmick held the winning ticket! Seven Springs Mountain Resort unselfishly provided a weekend getaway at their stunning resort – Buddy Clark is a hero at home for winning that prize! Barbara Billman won a pair of Pittsburgh Pirates game tickets for next season. And Jake Kiss will be getting his ride tuned up at REI, who donated their prize for the best hand in our poker run. All in, we raised over \$6,300 for the Trail in raffle items – so we'd like to send a BIG THANK YOU to Pro Bikes, The Tandem Connection, Seven Springs, REI and everyone who bought tickets! And congratulations to our winners!

If anyone missed out on the rockin' red Tim Killmeyer Collectors' Edition 13th Annual Tour T-Shirt, we have a few left which can be purchased from the Trail office, or at our ride again next year. T-shirts are only guaranteed for pre-registered participants, so those in the know are aware of the distinct benefit for registering before the deadline – you'll see them sporting the red joker t-shirt!

While we can never thank all our generous sponsors enough – it won't be for lack of trying! Many thanks for their financial support go out to our wonderful Title Sponsor: Fed Ex Ground; Premier Sponsor: Calgon Carbon; Presenting Sponsors: Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation, AeroTech Designs, Audia Foundation, Brothers Grimm, Chapman Corporation, Eaton, Meadow Ridge Development LLC, Nova Chemicals, Penna Flame, Quality Quick Printing, and WYEP/WESA; and our Corporate Sponsors: ADP, Airport Authority, Bonnie Loya – Coldwell Banker Real Estate Services, Day Apollo, MarkWest, Park West Supply, Pittsburgh Pro Bike, R Michael Baker, RG Johnson Company, Seven Springs, the Tandem Connection, Trek of Robinson, Under Armour, Washington Auto Mall, Wojanis Hydraulic Supply Co. Additional and much needed patronage came from our Supporting Sponsors: Appalachian Producers Services, Berg Dental, Country Meadows Retirement Communities, Dr Webb & Associates, Gutter Helmet, Homewood Suites, Holy Trinity Knights of Columbus, Mueller Appraisal Service LLC, Robert Morris University, Somma Funeral Home, Southwestern PA Eye Center, The Physical Therapy Institute, Top Gear Bicycle Shop, Toyota of Washington, Washington Chiropractic Center Inc, Washington Health System and the West Hills Road Riders. You'll find the names of all wonderful sponsors proudly emblazoned on our T-shirts – and we appreciate them all!

Our biggest THANK YOU goes to all our fantastic volunteers, who rise to all manner of challenges to ensure that our riders are safe and well cared for, from the early morning hours of parking through lunch to the final clean up at the end of the day – we'd be lost without you!

Congratulations and heartfelt appreciation goes out to our excellent Tour the Montour Planning and Execution team members (Phyllis McChesney, Bud Halpin, Pat Friedsam, Janet Jackson, Teresa Gallagher, Mark Imgrund and Dennis Pfeiffer), the incredible folks from Our Lady of Sacred Heart who work so tirelessly all day at Brothers Grimm, the supremely multi-talented Robbins family, and our event team leads:

Dave Mueller – Rest Stops
Debbie Andrus – Food/Grimm
Tim Killmeyer – King/Queen of the Mountain
Don Thobaben – SAG/Ride Patrol
George Coholich – Parking
Noel Letterio – Gifts/Prizes

Given the lovely day and the friendliest riders around, our 13th Tour will go down in history as an incredibly lucky combination of wonderful weather, volunteers, sponsors and riders! On behalf of the entire team, we'd like to thank all who supported and participated in our 13th Annual Tour the Montour! Please don't forget to mark your calendars for next year's **14th Annual Tour The Montour on September 24th, 2016!** We will see you all there!

Until then, keep smiling, riding and enjoying all that The Montour Trail has to offer!

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

Bridges on the Montour - Part 1**By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society**

You cannot go very far on the Montour Trail without crossing a bridge. On the 52 miles of original Montour Railroad right-of-way there were over 80 bridges that the railroad was responsible for building and maintaining. Most carried the railroad over streams, roadways or other railroads, but the Montour was also responsible for several bridges that carried roads or such over their railroad.



The bridge over Chartiers Creek is an example of a deck plate girder bridge. The large main girders are placed directly under the rails. Gene P. Schaeffer photo.

The new bridges completed this year to fill gaps in the trail are actually replacements for original railroad bridges at those locations. These include Valley Brook Road in Peters Township, the Venice Bridge that flies over Routes 50 & 980 in Cecil Township and the new concrete deck on the Library Viaduct.

There are several different types of bridges that you cross as you transit the trail. Many are made of steel girders or trusses, while some are concrete slabs, beams or arches. The concrete bridges will be discussed in the next newsletter.

The largest number of steel bridges were deck plate girder bridges. These are comprised of two large rectangular girders made of steel plates riveted together. Timber decking was fastened across their tops and rails were then spiked to the decking. As this type would have open spaces between the deck timbers, they have been modified with solid decking to carry trail traffic. Examples of deck plate girder bridges would be the McDonald and Library Viaducts and the crossing of Chartiers Creek at the Cecil/Peters Township line, each consisting of multiple spans. These three originally had timber decking but were reconstructed with concrete decks to carry trail traffic. Single spans were also widely used, like several over Montour Run in the first 5 miles of trail or Glass Hill and Papp Roads in Cecil Township. The original deck plate girder span over Georgetown Road in Cecil now sits beside the trail and its construction can be readily seen. There is also an example of a plate girder on display at the Galati Road trailhead in Southview. Generally, the longer the span, the larger the girder was made to carry the load.

Another style is through plate girder bridges. These are also comprised of two main steel plate girders, but placed so that the decking and tracks are supported on steel beams between the girders, giving it a U-shaped profile. This allows increased clearance under the bridge span. The decking was either timber or poured concrete. The concrete decks would have rock ballast spread on top of the decking and the rails were then laid on wooden ties on top of the ballast, similar to rail construction on flat ground. Examples of through plate girder bridges are at the Hassam Road crossing, Cliff Mine Road beside the Parkway West, over Route 30 in Imperial, and near Route 19 at Valley Brook Road.

A different type of steel beam bridge is the through-truss bridge. The tracks ran inside and through the steel framework on a timber deck. Examples are the bridges over the active railroad just east of Greers Tunnel in Peters Township and one span of the McDonald Viaduct where it crosses over the Panhandle Trail.

The truss bridge over Clinton Road in Bethel Park is new construction.



A view out the windshield of a track gang hi-rail truck as they transit the through-truss span of the McDonald Viaduct in 1976. The open framework supports a timber deck. Tim Sposato photo.

The Montour Railroad built many bridges a century or more ago that are still in use to carry the trail today as physical reminders of Montour history.



The U-shaped profile of a through plate girder bridge span is evident in this view of the Venice Bridge after abandonment of the railroad. Trains traveled between, or through, the main girders. Tim Sposato photo

Other steel bridges use re-purposed pedestrian bridges from industrial plants, like those at Route 980 north of McDonald and Piney Fork in South Park.

Several of the original railroad bridges were removed by PennDOT over the years, due to traffic safety issues. Some blocked road traffic sight lines or had clearances too low for emergency vehicles and large trucks. Some of these have been replaced with new trail bridges of steel or concrete beams, like those at Venice, or over Southview, Muse-Bishop, Morganza, Georgetown, Valley Brook, McMurray, Bebout and Sugar Camp Roads. To solve the safety issues, many of these new bridges increased the bridge span from the original 24 to 40 feet to well over 100 feet.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Yahoo group at http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/ There are currently 348 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

Wesley Attwood
Wendy S.Bell
Jim Cray
Diane Dickson
Paul & Jacqueline Fisher
Sara Hansel
James & Victoria Kilmer
Michael Levenson
Laurie & Jim Mann
Pam Muia & Tony Sutton
Kathryn M. & John R. Nicholson
Robert O'Neill
Sheila Renz
William Thomson
Jennifer Tracy
Sharon Ward
Ashley Watkins

Benefactors

Tim Baker
Greg & Juliann Brzozowski
Iris & Jerry Liberatore
Charles & Joan Marstiller
Irene & Keith McAllister

Leaders

David Kasper
Robert & Amelia Shillingsburg
Bruce & Barbara Weigand

In Memory of Raymond
H.Owczarzak
by Sharon Ward

King and Queen Of The Mountain Results

Congratulations to all who challenged themselves on Hassam Rd. hill during the Tour the Montour. King and Queen in **BOLD**. The King and Queen both received a trophy and a custom cycling jersey from Aerotech Design in Coraopolis

Matt Casebeer	4:00	Kevin McCooney	5:42
Chris Butor	4:02	Jarret Fawcett	5:45
Mike Stanton	4:31	Ted Weidner	5:45
Michael McDermott	4:44	Mike Black	5:47
Gary McCuen	4:50	Raymond Paff	5:56
Keith Hixenbaugh	4:53	Daniel Baldigowski	5:57
Jeffrey Devlin	5:10	Ryan Andrisko	5:59
Mickey Black	5:10	Charles Fields	6:10
Donald Hall	5:20	Rob Rodgers	6:43
Stephen Witmer	5:21	Michael Gin	7:05
Jeff Secker	5:23	Joey Black	7:35
Mark Collins	5:24	Tyler Starvaggi	8:21
Jim Donahue	5:27	Batouilly Diallo	8:52
Teresa Gallagher	5:32	Dave Jones	8:56
Kevin Burr	5:35	?? Ondik	9:46



I want to help complete the Montour Trail!

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

■ Student/Senior	\$15
■ Individual	\$25
■ Family	\$35
■ Supporting	\$50
■ Sustaining	\$100
■ Benefactor	\$250
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Library Viaduct



980-50 Flyover



Valleybrook #2 Bridge

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from the Montour Trail Council. Please
enjoy our 2015 presents to you, the trail
user.