



MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 9 Issue 5

Sept/Oct 1998

Trail Tip o' the Month

- Beware of raccoons on the Trail. They may look cute and cuddly, but they are wild animals and ... they bite!

Mantra of the Month

- It is impossible to enjoy idling thoroughly, unless one has plenty of work to do.

Jerome K. Jerome

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Char-Valley's Science Class on the Trail

By John Hooton

We were most pleased to have a work crew from Mr. Alex Covi's sophomore class arrive at our Montour Trail, Cecil segment, on Friday, May 22, 1998, as a part of Chartiers Valley High School's community service program.

The boys did excellent work in grass trimming at fence posts and Trailheads along our entire 4 1/2 mile Cecil-Hendersonville section. Not to be outdone, one work party of girls groomed and planted a 12' x 60' new wildflower bed while another weeded and mulched a 100-yard long flower and tree buffer area we had established to hide the old railroad blemishes of long ago. Still other girls were busy planting a number of Rose O'Sharon

bushes along the Trail. Longtime volunteers on hand were: Don Berty, Morris DeLiere, Hoyt Hall, John Hooton, Dan Jones, Joe Nugent and Ted Slimick.

Sometimes things just seem to go right. As we had finished our work and the students were getting ready to leave, who shows up but a television crew from Mayor Tom Murphy's office in Pittsburgh! Pittsburgh will host the 2nd International Conference on Greenways and Trails in June of 1999 and the TV crew is preparing a documentary for that event and the students will be in it! In addition to this, each student received a copy of the group photo, compliments of the Cecil Friends

of the Trail, and a "Trail-Inch" certificate for 10 inches with their names on it.



Chartiers Valley H.S.'s Sophomore Science Class is ready for a full day on the Cecil Trail.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the outing on such a beautiful day, and we certainly enjoyed having them. We would be happy to host a similar group at any time!

On account of the "count"

On August 1, two infrared break beam traffic counters were installed on the Montour Trail in Allegheny County. One was installed in Robinson Township. And the other in Findlay. After just one full week of operation, the count was 2750 in Robinson and 3672 in Findlay.

This equipment was

installed to support the economic impact study being conducted by the Allegheny Trail Alliance. The ATA is a coalition made up of seven groups, including one based in Maryland, whose purpose is to build and maintain the trail to Cumberland, where it will connect with the C & O Canal Towpath to Washington, D.C.

Part of this study, other than traffic counts, will be a survey of businesses adjacent to our trails.

The information obtained from this study will be used by the ATA to secure federal and state funding to complete the trail network from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C.



MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Trail Talk

from the Editor's Desk

It's always fun for me to pass Trail-tales on to you. This one comes from Darryl Sigel, who proudly dropped me a line concerning his wife, Carolyn.

Carolyn, paralyzed due to a spinal cord injury (L2 injury level) since 1982, is 38 years old. As you can see, her paralysis doesn't prevent her from enjoying the Montour Trail every weekend, weather permitting.



Carolyn Sigel on the Montour Trail.

For the last 3 years, the Sigels have been coming from South Baldwin (near Caste Village) to enjoy a couple of hours on the Trail because it is easily accessible from the parking area and is so flat.

Due to her daily 1/2 hour arm-ergometer workouts, Carolyn has excellent upper-body strength. She manually wheels her "Quickie Two" wheelchair on the Trail covering 4 miles in 1 hour. She likes to do a total of 4 to 5 miles an outing. By the smile on her face you can tell that she enjoys every minute of it!

As valedictorian of her South Allegheny High School class, she went on to obtain a degree in chemistry from the Oral Roberts University, and now works full time as a cytotechnologist (reading PAP smears).

Truly, she is an inspiration to all! Thanks Sigels!

Debby



Newsletter Deadline

All articles for the Nov./Dec. Trail-Letter will be due **no later than** October 1, 1998.

Please see Page 2 for submitting correspondence. Thank you.

Have you noticed?

We have a new look! Your opinion means a lot to us. Send your comments to:
Montour Trail-Letter
33 Sterling Dr.
Coraopolis, PA 15108
Or e-mail to:
debho@juno.com

Thanks!

The Montour Trail Council is an *all volunteer* organization founded in 1989 to convert the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way and the abandoned Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad into a fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

September 1998

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Calendar of Events*October 1998*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September:

- * Allegheny County Rib Cook-Off will be held at South Park on **Sept. 4, 5, 6, and 7.**
- * Join Gov. Ridge on the 4th annual Keystone Ride, **Sept. 9 & 10.** Call Michelle Grove 717-787-5825
- * IKEA/Montour 1/2 Marathon 5K Run and Walk is scheduled for **Saturday, Sept. 12.**
- * Cecil Township Indian Summer Festival will be held on **Sept. 26, & 27.** See page 6.
- * Public Meeting #2 of the Montour Run Watershed Planning Project presentation and public comment on the study consultant's recommendations will be held on **Monday, Sept. 28 at 7:00 p.m.** at Robert Morris College (Moon campus), Conference Center.

October:

- * MTC Annual meeting will be held at Lindenwood Golf Club on **Oct. 25 from 4 pm to 8 pm.** All are invited to attend. Details on the event will be mailed to members.
- * The 2nd International Greenways and Rails-to-Trails Conference to be held in **Pittsburgh on June 22, 1999.**

Friends' Meetings and Work Parties

- ◆ **MTC Board Meeting**, every **third Monday** of the month - at Chartiers Valley High School, in the faculty lounge. Turn left off of the- Kirwan Heights exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go under the Interstate, and the school is on your left. Call Dick at 412- 859-6864 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ◆ **Cecil Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **first Tuesday** of the month - at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, at **7:30 pm.** Call 412-221-6406 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every **third Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am.** Meet at the Storage shed at Hendersonville. Call 412-221-6406 for more information.
- ◆ **Moon/Robinson Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **Thursday** before the second Saturday of the month at **7:00 pm.**, at the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Clever Rd. in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every **second Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am.** Meet at North Star Petroleum (formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 412-262-3748 for more information.
- ◆ **Findlay/North Fayette Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail**, call Don at 724-899-3695 or Pete at 412-788-4136 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every **fourth Saturday** of the month - **9:00 am.** Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 412-788-4136 for more information.
- ◆ **Bethel Park Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **first Tuesday** of the month at **7:30 pm** in the Bethel Park Municipal Building Council Chambers. Anyone interested in the Bethel Park Trail segment is encouraged to come. For various committee meetings (such as fundraising) contact Peter Kohnke at 412-854-1835 for more information.
 - Work & Clean-up party**, every **second and fourth Saturday** of the month - **8:30 am.** Call Bob O'Connell at 412-833-6259 for location and information.
- ◆ **South Hills Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party**, last **Saturday** of every month. For more information call Dr. Joe Rudolph at 412-653-4900.
- ◆ **MacDonald Events:**
 - Friends of the Trail Work & Clean-up party**, tentatively held on the **first Saturday** of every month. For more information, contact Ray Johnston at 724-356-2621.

...and the PREZ sez...

by Dick Quasey

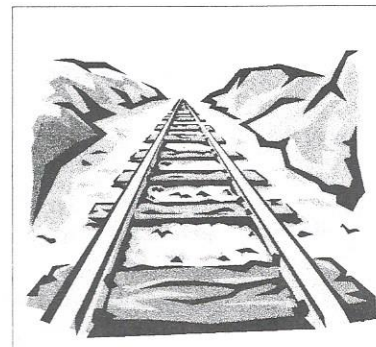
A substantial portion of funds needed for Trail segments like Primrose to Venice (I.e. McDonald to Cecil) are unavailable until the administrative procedures for ISTEPA and BESTEPA financing are determined by PADOT.

Also the disposition of 18 road crossings, under the jurisdiction of the Public Utility Commission must be decided before MTC is able to proceed with projects like the Morganza Road crossing in Hendersonville. MTC is pursuing this matter jointly with PADOT and DCNR. A decision is expected early next year.

Efforts are being made to reach formal agreements with municipalities, state agencies, the County of Washington and land owners that have a variety of interests and concerns regarding the development of the Montour Trail which is, as you know, to be a really continuous hiking biking trail from PA Rt 51 near Groveton to Clairton.

More immediate, Amerikohl begins a coal strip mining operation between Boggs Run (Bugay Drive) and US Rt 22 later this year. The result will be an additional 2 more miles of Trail. That plus another 3 miles from Champion to Quicksilver by next Spring will provide 17 con-

tinuous miles of Trail – something MTC is working on diligently to achieve.



It takes money, time, hard work and patience to make a rail-trail come true.

MTC WEB
ADDRESS



Visit the Montour Trail web-site at: <http://trfn.clpgh.org/orgs/mtc/>

MTC aids Alliance's River Sweep Clean Up

By Stan Saltinger

Manpower and equipment furnished by the MTC were vital to the success of the Montour Run cleanup conducted by sixty volunteers from the Montour Valley Alliance and Duquesne Light on June 20. The volunteers for this event, which was held in conjunction with the six state River Sweep cleanup of the Ohio River Basin, removed an enormous amount of illegally dumped trash from a wooded site overlooking the Montour Trail, Montour Run, and Meeks Run near the Trail's Hassam Road parking area in Moon Township.

Because of space limitations, the

trash removed had to be transported to the parking area for transfer to a dumpster. MTC's trail truck and tractor, operated by Pete Merther and Steve Schotting, handled much of this material. The Southwest Regional Office of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection furnished supplies and made arrangements for placement of the dumpster by BFI Waste Systems free of charge. Moon Township Police helped with traffic control, and the Moon Township Municipal Authority made space available at the Sewage

Treatment Plant for parking.

The Department of Environmental Protection was extremely pleased by the number and enthusiasm of the volunteers, which exceeded all expectations. "I've never seen a Sweep group that worked harder or got so much done," said Terry Pallas, DEP's Chief of Water Quality Management for Southwestern Pennsylvania, who helped organize the cleanup.

And to prevent further dumping, the property owner has barricaded the entrance.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Membership Chairman

Jerry Agin

Audrey Bensy
Erma Blair
Scott Bown
John M Brandon
Denny Brua
Ram L Dhawan, MD
Richard & Marilyn Dillio
Kathryn L. Emery
Ronald A. Flecher
Louise Foster
Michael & M. T. Geraci
Dr & Mrs David H.
Hennessey
Luke & Nancy Hingson
Dr & Mrs Ivan Jirak
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Jenny & Roger Kies
Roy Kraynyk & Sharon
Yeager
Bob Kurlfink & Ann
Kurlfink
Sandy Lang
Martha McEvoy

Patricia S. Miller, MD
Montour Valley Grange
#2005

David F. Murphy
Thomas M Naugle
Richard Orr
C. Pash, MD
Heather Quedenfeld
Homer R. Roberts
Carolyn Sigel
Peter Stangert
Ronald Vaccari family
Ms. Judy Werner
James S. Wojcik
Nathaniel Yingling

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

BENEFACTORS

Thank You!

Kris & Linda Routch
Gregory A. Brzozowski

New Trail Rep. needed

representing the South Hills Friends of the Montour Trail to attend the monthly MTC board meetings (which meet every third Monday of the month), and provide input as to the specific needs of this area. Anyone interested should call Dr. Joe Rudolph at 412-653-4900.

Enter the

IKEA-Montour Trail 1/2 Marathon and 5K Run/Walk!

There's still time. Race day registration opens at 6:30 a.m. on Sat. Sept. 12 at IKEA in the Robinson Town Centre.

Computer Volunteers

We are in great need of people to enter our survey data into a spread sheet. The data will then be consolidated and analyzed for use in fundraising and Trail management.

If you are computer literate and have access to a PC with

Excel, we can certainly use your help. If your PC has a spreadsheet other than Excel, we may be able to work something with it.

Interested volunteers should call Jack Swisher at 412-221-7708 (evening) or 412-344-1810 Ext. 256 (day).

Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

- ☐ I want to spread the word. Please send me additional flyers.
- ☐ I have written my Legislator and County Commissioners asking them to support the trail.
- ☐ My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.
- ☐ I know a group interested in a presentation.
- ☐ I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT/SENIORS | \$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"/> LEADERS CIRCLE | \$500 + up |

(Membership is tax deductible)

- ☐ I wish to make an additional tax deductible contribution of \$ _____ to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality.

(Make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (day time) _____ (evening) _____

By applying for membership in the Montour Trail Council, I indicate my support of its goals.

SIGNATURE _____

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling tollfree, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Please fill out this application and return it with your check to:

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 11866
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

DON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice option #3308 where you work.

Cecil Trail Rep. honored at Annual Dinner

On April 25, 1998 the Greater Pittsburgh Council, Boy Scouts of America held their Annual Recognition Dinner for the Iroquois District at the Miller's Run Grange in Venice, Pa. Honored at this time was MTC board member and Cecil Trail representative, Don Bertly.

The Silver Beaver Award, the highest honor given to a volunteer in scouting, was given to Don after his Scouting and Community Service merits and accomplishments were reviewed by the Distinguished Awards Committee and approved by the National Court of Honor.

His Scouting record includes: Asst. Cubmaster 69, Cubmaster 69,

Asst. Scoutmaster troop 69, Committee Member of pack and Troop 1369, Explorer Advisor Post 369, District Activities Chairman & Co-Chairman, Asst. District Commissioner Iroquois District, Day Camp B-B gun Instructor.

He is a recipient of: Wood Badge, Order of the Arrow, Scouter's Key, Award of Merit and Scouter's Training Award.

In Community Service he has served with distinction in other fields exclusive of scouting including: Youth Baseball Coach, Midget Football Coach and Hunter Safety

Instructor. Noteworthy is his accomplishments and service to his country through involvement as: member of PA National Guard, US Army Sergeant, Cecil American Legion Service Officer; Vice Commander Sergeant at Arms, member of the Drill Team, and Board member of MTC.

Don is a lifelong resident of Cecil, married to wife, Joan, for 47 years. They have 3 children, Greg, Dennis, and Kim. Besides being in scouting for close to 50 years, he's been with the MTC since the beginning of the Cecil Trail, on the Cecil Parks Board for 15 years and Chairman of Cecil's Festival for 11 years.

"Congratulations, Don!"



MTC getting serious about discourteous bikers

By Bruce Barron

At its July meeting, the MTC board struggled earnestly with an issue of grave concern: unsafe biking on the trail.

Findlay Township police have received several complaints about bikers traveling too fast or failing to pass on the left. A wide range of radical steps could be taken to combat the problem. For example:



* New signs stating "Surgeon General's Warning: It is unsafe to pass on the right."

* Posted speed limits, with local constables setting radar.

* Board members patrolling the trail with camouflaged baseball bats protruding horizontally from their handlebars to skewer bikers passing carelessly.

* Situating the "rules of the trail" signs in the middle of the trail, forcing

all users to stop and read them.

* Publicizing, in local newspapers, an artist's rendering of unsafe bikers.

The board deferred, for now, authorizing any of these draconian options, in the hope that the problem will be resolved if everyone who reads this newsletter can encourage their neighbors on the trail to exercise caution and courtesy!

Trail booth at Cecil's Indian Summer Festival

By Don Bertly

The Cecil Township Indian Summer Festival will be held Saturday & Sunday, the 26th & 27th of September at Cecil Park. The festival, in its 11th year, will provide entertainment for the whole family, and once again, an opportunity for the Cecil Friends of the Montour Trail to promote the Trail.

A Trail booth will be manned

these two days by the same volunteers who maintain this 4 1/2 mile Cecil segment, which was built in 1992. Volunteers with free time or equipment, and assistance from the township have made it possible to maintain a beautification program such as grass cutting and general maintenance.

Each area of the developed trail

has its own organized group (The Friends of the Montour Trail) which, along with its local government, help to maintain the Trail in its entirety.

Join and support a local Trail group. Visit the Trail booth at the festival. It's a wonderful weekend - we'll be there!



Johnston bridge repair

by Dennis Pfeiffer

Many members of the Montour Trail Council, (MTC) are probably unaware, that the council owns the Johnston Road bridge in Mt. Pleasant Township, Washington County. This road bridge was built by the Montour Railroad in 1927 to accommodate vehicular traffic over the railroad right of way on the Westland Branch (see trail map near mile 25). The bridge was acquired by the MTC as part of the purchase of the Montour Railroad right of way in Washington County. Recently, MTC has become keenly aware of this ownership. Twice they have had to repair sections of the wooden deck. The most recent repair occurred on Saturday, August 1, 1998.

In preparation for this work, MTC President, Dick Quasey sent notices to all of the local newspapers advising that the bridge would be closed for repairs. At 8:30 am on Saturday morning, August 1, the bridge was closed and a great turnout of fourteen (14) volunteers commenced working. This great crew included: Dave Wright, Don Berty, Ray Johnston, Barry Johnston, Dick Quasey, John Hooton, Bob Boyce, Ed Cupanzic, Hoyt Hall, Neal Phillips, Dave Lewis, Craig Lewis, Merle Schermer and Dennis Pfeiffer.

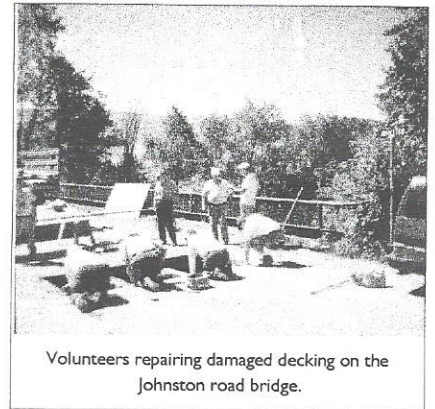
This bridge deck is rather unique when compared to most of the road bridges in Western PA.. It consists of wood 2 by 6's turned on end and nailed to stringers 3 1/2 feet apart. The section to be repaired was 10 1/2 foot wide by 5 1/2 foot long starting at the western abutment.

After much manipulating with a Sawzall and worm circular saw, the bad section was removed. The crew cleaned

out underneath the removed section and then started nailing the 10 1/2 foot 2 by 6's to the western abutment and stringers. The process went very well with 1/2 inch shims being used where required. However, as the unrepaired section became smaller, it was more difficult to swing the hammers. A brainstorming session ensued on the best way to complete the remaining 10 1/2 foot by 10 1/2 inch unrepaired section. Barry Johnston calculated the width would at least require 5 1/2 or possibly six 2 by 6's.

The consensus was to nail at least five 2 by 6's together and place them into the remaining hole as one unit. After the 5th board was nailed together Barry eyeballed (or measured - no one knew for sure), the remaining hole and said, "Lets go for it." The sixth 2 by 6 was nailed to the others. Now came the moment of truth! When the piece was laid into the slot, only about six inches on one end would fit. This started a process that seemed to shrink the wood to fit the hole. Three or four volunteers would stand on one side of this huge piece of lumber as another volunteer smashed the opposite side downward with enormous thrusts of a sledge hammer. This process went back and forth between sides as the huge piece of lumber slowly went into place. After about ten minutes, the piece finally was flush with the other portions of the deck! Amazingly, the piece was then toe nailed into place. Barry Johnston was commended for his enormous foresight.

During the day as this decking work was progressing, some other work relative to the bridge was occurring. Merle Schermer, a structural bridge engineer for the RBA Group, was on site per the Montour Trails request to inspect the



Volunteers repairing damaged decking on the Johnston road bridge.

entire bridge. Merle said the bridge was sound and the 15 ton weight limit would probably still apply.

Also occurring this day was a bridge surface cleaning party. The bridge surface near the railings was cleaned of an enormous amount of accumulated dirt and stone. The cleaning was necessary, because Mt. Pleasant Township volunteered to tar and chip the bridge deck on the same day they tar and chip Johnston Road. Bill Dinsmore, Chairman of Mt. Pleasant Supervisors and Road Crew Director, was also on site to inspect the repaired section. According to Bill, the tar and chipping will occur on August 24.

Everything considered it was a very satisfying workday with all things accomplished as planned by 2:00 p.m. that afternoon.

The MTC would like to thank all the dedicated volunteers for their hard work and to Mt. Pleasant Twp. for their cooperation. In addition an extra special thanks to Dave Wright, Dick Quasey and Don Berty for organizing the work, obtaining work materials and meeting with the Mt. Pleasant Township Supervisors.

When the wind blows ... the treetops fall down!

Shortly after July 4th, heavy storms with high winds passed through the Robinson Twp. area causing many a tree to topple in yards as well as on the Trail. Our trusty "Friends of the Trail" were out to clear the debris and fallen timber after the storms ended.

Later, however, additional trees fell near mile marker 1, which caused an almost total blockage of

the Trail from both sides.

After seeing the dangerous situation, it was discovered through the "Trail-grapevine" that regular Trail-users, Jesse and Diane Forquer, hurried home, then returned to the Trail with several saws strapped to Diane's bike, and cleared the path for



the many Trail-users that day.

This was not the first time that their love of the Trail and concern for others has been seen.

The "grapevine" also says that there are other good Samaritans out there doing lots of Trail deeds happily, and anonymously.

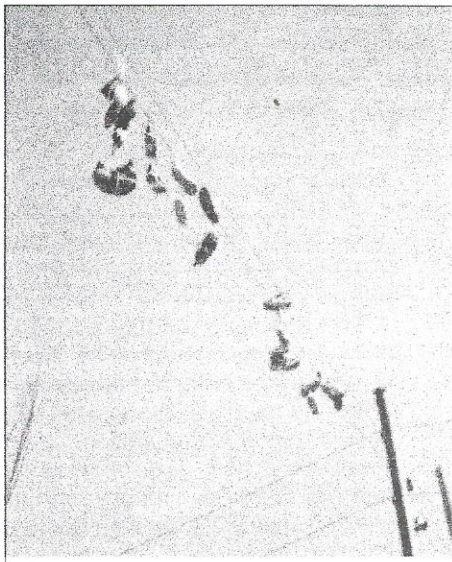
Our thanks to you, Diane and Jesse, and to all the rest of you good Samaritans everywhere!



MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL
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"Hang 'em high" above the Montour Trail!

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