



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

# MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

The 2017 Pennsylvania Trail of the Year

Volume 29 Issue 5

September-October 2018

## The Originals: Jerry Agin



Jerry in the 2018 Pittsburgh Marathon. Note the bugle under right arm that he uses to cheer the competitors on.

Jerry Agin is almost certainly the only person who was doing long-distance running workouts on the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way in the late 1980s. As a result, his route to becoming an original Montour Trail Council board member is a bit peculiar.

Jerry is a multitasking guy. He wrote his first computer program in 1962, when hardly anyone had computers. He earned a Ph.D. from Stanford and was the first outsider hired by Carnegie Mellon University when it established its Robotics Institute in 1979.

On top of that, Jerry is a serious violinist. After retiring from his computer science career in 1997, he completed a bachelor's degree in music. He plays in the pit orchestra for the Pittsburgh Savoyards (who perform Gilbert and Sullivan musicals) and has developed a software, Intonia, that helps violinists stay in tune.

And on top of that, Jerry is a runner. His most recent media coverage came in May, when he was the oldest competitor in the Pittsburgh Marathon—which he has successfully completed in nine of the last 10 years.

Around 1987, searching for new and adventurous off-road routes for his long-distance training, Jerry stumbled upon the Montour Trail. The right of way was mostly grass at that time, with some railroad ballast and miscellaneous debris to navigate. *Continues on page 4*

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[www.montourtrail.org](http://www.montourtrail.org)  
To converse go to:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43518292159>

or

<http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Montour-Trail/info>

## Board Nominees, 2019 - 2021

At the August meeting, the Montour Trail Council Board of Directors nominated the following members for election to the Board for the 2019 – 2021 term. Each Montour Trail Council member is entitled to vote for the nominees— see the separate flyer—and results will be tabulated and announced at the annual meeting in November.

**Braden Ditch** is excited to renew his position as MTC Treasurer, having been on the board for a year. When not riding or running on the Montour Trail, Braden and his wife, Tiffany, can be found bicycle touring down the Pacific Coast Highway or hiking the John Muir Trail.

**Pat Friedsam, MD**, practices internal medicine in Washington, PA. Since joining the board in 2016, she's been co-chair of the Membership and Community Outreach Committee and is an active member and fund-raiser for the Tour the Montour. Pat can be found most weekends during the summer on the trail interacting with users, encouraging them to join the MTC, and selling Tour the Montour raffle tickets.

**Mark Imgrund** is a retired software executive, currently working with a Pittsburgh tech start-up company in an operations role. He began volunteering with MTC in 1997, has served on the board for two prior six year terms, and was the MTC president in 2007-2009. He's the founder and current president of the Peters Friends' group, and is Chair of the MTC Operations Committee, and a member of the IT, Real Estate, Finance, and Engineering and Construction committees. Mark lives in Peters with wife Tina, and enjoys biking, hiking, hunting, and good craft beer (though not necessarily, he says, in that order).

**Jack Kun** has been a practicing CPA in Bethel Park for over 35 years, providing services to a variety of business and individual clients. His goal is to use his financial expertise to assist and advise the Montour Trail Council in managing cash flow, projecting operating budget needs and further develop the plan for funding long-term capital improvements. Jack is an avid bicyclist and volunteers with the Montour Trail Patrol.

*Continues on page 5*



### **MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Dennis Pfeiffer	President
Ned Williams	Vice President
Braden Ditch	Treasurer
Phyllis McChesney	Secretary

<i>Braden Ditch</i>	<i>2016-2018</i>
<i>Patricia Friedsam</i>	<i>2016-2018</i>
<i>Denis Kane</i>	<i>2016-2018</i>
<i>Gil McGurl</i>	<i>2016-2018</i>
<i>Dennis Pfeiffer</i>	<i>2016-2018</i>
<i>Phyllis McChesney</i>	<i>2017-2019</i>
<i>Jen Mosesso</i>	<i>2017-2019</i>
<i>Dave Tetrick</i>	<i>2017-2019</i>
<i>Don Thobaben</i>	<i>2017-2019</i>
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<i>Dave Borrebach</i>	<i>2018-2020</i>
<i>Braden Ditch</i>	<i>2016-2018</i>
<i>Mark Modispacher</i>	<i>2018-2020</i>
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<i>David Oyler</i>	<i>2018-2020</i>
<i>Tom Prezel</i>	<i>2018-2020</i>
<i>Ned Williams</i>	<i>2018-2020</i>

#### **THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER**

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All Trail-letter correspondence should be addressed to:

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**Bridgeville, PA 15017**

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Dennis Sims, managing editor

Mark Imgrund

Dennis Pfeiffer

## **The Prez says:**

Hello, Montour Trail Council members, friends, users and supporters of the Montour Trail. We are very appreciative of your support of the Montour Trail system. We hope your enjoyment of the trail equates to our enjoyment of building and maintaining this 62-mile system as a unique Western PA community treasure.

Despite some horrendous rainstorms, it's been a great Summer trail season so far. It's amazing the number of users on the trail. As of this writing I have attended 14 formal friends work parties on the trail and several other informal work parties. There is a constant flow of happy trail users and most of them "pay" us for our days' work. Pay? Yes, they are very complementary and many thank us volunteers for our hard work. I say to them thanks for the complements as that is our "pay" for the day. They are always surprised by the reply.

Over the years I have met many friendly, happy, active Montour Trail users. To give you a little flavor, this year I made notes on some of the trail users I met.

#### **Happy Parents!**

It was early June when I met a family of five (Father, Mother and three children.) all on bikes riding past with the youngest appearing to be about five. I spoke to the mother and she said this is a great event. She said this is the first time in 12 years that all children are on their own bikes and thus we can finally take a nice family fun ride without the burden of carrying passengers

#### **John & Julie Shaver's Friends!**

For about the last ten years John and his wife Julie have daily walked a section of trail starting at the Hassam Road trail head. John and Julie have met numerous trail users over the years. They met so many trail users they decided to keep track of them. John told me last week that there list is now up to **203!** Truly the trail is another Main Street of the communities. John also is a member of the Airport Friends group and keeps us aware of any items needing attention discovered on his walks.

#### **94 Mile Rides!**

On June 16, the Airport Friends were repairing split rail fencing near mile 0.7. We spoke to two separate riders that had started at mile "0" and were biking to mile 47 and back the same day for a **94-mile ride**. Quite a feat. I did speak to one of the riders Cal a few weeks later. Cal had completed his feat as planned.

#### **Long Distance Walkers!**

In late June at the Cliff Mine Trailhead (Mile 5.9), I met two young male hikers probably about 16 years old. They were filling up their camelbacks with water.

They said their plans were to walk to Clairton in two days and planned to make the Hendersonville campsite (Mile 25.6) by the end of the first day. An impressive almost 20 mile hike the first day and a 22 mile hike the second day.

#### **First Birthday Bike Ride!**

On July 13, I met a family of four (father, mother and two children). The father was leading with his one-year-old son in a seat in the front of his bike and the mother and 6-year-old daughter following on their bikes. The father said this is was his son's "First Birthday" and first ride on the trail.

Happy Trails to you.

Dennis Pfeiffer, President

## 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 "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 6:30 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 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

### 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 and varying locations during warmer weather at 7:00 p.m. Work and cleanup parties on the first Wednesday and third Saturday of every month at 8:30 a.m. For more information, please call Jim Robbins at 724-941-6132. For monthly meetings contact 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 Caucus Room behind the 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 46.6)

Meeting second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at South Park Township Community Room or the Township Library located at the Township Building at 2675 Brownsville Road, South Park, 15129. Work and cleanup parties on the first Saturday of the month. For more information, contact David Oyler at 412-831-9288, davidoyler1950@gmail.com, or Paul McKeown at 412-835-6692, mckeownp@comcast.net

### The Montour Railroad Historical Society:

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

### Westland Friends: (Westland Branch)

Meeting is second Thursday of the month at 11:00 AM at Paneras Restaurant in Bridgeville located on Route 50. Work and cleanup parties meet at the Galati Trailhead on Southview Road and will be announced. For more information contact Doug Ettinger at 412-302-1993 or dougettinger@verizon.net.

## The Bethel Friends of the Montour Trail

The first article about the Friends of the Montour Trail in Bethel



Park appeared in the September-October 2011 publication of the Montour Trail-Letter. Coincidentally, that same issue featured on its front page an article about the Grand Opening of the J. R. Taylor Memorial Bridge (a trail bridge over Clifton Road in Bethel Park) that had occurred September 4 that year.

Since that time, the Bethel Friends have been able to concentrate their efforts on maintaining the Bethel Branch, as well as the section

of the mainline Montour Trail between Peters Township and South Park (Library) near the Lindenbrooke Apartment complex. Since the trail in Bethel is located in a densely populated area, it is arguably the busiest section of the Montour Trail. For that reason, the Bethel Friends have continued to organize two Work Parties every month (2nd & 4th Saturday mornings) March through November. They are fortunate that they have volunteers who are willing to support their efforts—rain or shine! (Please see the photo taken recently by one of our volunteers of those who had also turned out in the rain to work that day.) Most Work Parties consist of at least 10 volunteers—usually about 4 mowing and the rest dealing with trimming, dead tree removal, and / or whatever else needs attention on a given day.

Other volunteers also make it possible for the Group to have two major fund raisers a year. The J. R. Taylor 5K Race/Walk which is held the 1st Saturday in June (National Trails Day) depends on more than a dozen volunteers who help our race director, Bruce Barron. Penny Day (2nd Saturday in October) relies on another 18 or so who volunteer at 3 collection sites along the trail. To thank all those who have helped for their efforts, the Bethel Friends organize a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at the conclusion of the Penny Day activities (Collection and Work Party).

The Bethel Friends still enjoy the support of the Municipality of Bethel Park and the Community. Most of the Friends' mowers have been donated and Work Party volunteers have kept them operating. The Municipality empties garbage cans in 5 locations along the trail  
*continues on page 4*



## New Interpretive Signs Installed

Four new historical interpretive signs have been installed along the trail this summer by the Montour Railroad Historical Society.

The first was installed at the site of Morris Mine along the Westland Branch of the trail at mile W 0.5, behind the Weavertown supply yard along Rt. 50.



*Family riders check out the interpretive sign installed at Boggs. photo by Bryan Seip.*

Another was erected at the Boggs trailhead at mile 11.4. Boggs originally was a siding with a passenger and freight station and later was expanded as a multiple track yard serving the Champion Coal Preparation Plant and several local coal mines.

The third replaces a temporary sign at the signal tower in Coraopolis at mile 0.5. The signal tower controlled the section of track leading into Montour Junction.

The fourth sign was planted at mile 39 in South Park, commemorating the interchange connection with the B&O Railroad at Snowden and also the near-by PennMont connection with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

As you travel the Montour Trail, there are now over 30 interpretive signs installed at historically significant locations.

For more information about the Montour Railroad, go to [montourrr.com](http://montourrr.com)

## Bethel Friends continues from page 3

each week and also removes the piles of branches, vines, and debris that the Work Parties generate at least once a month.

Allegheny Power, upon whose property the Bethel Branch was established (via an Easement Agreement), has not been quite as helpful. To protect their lines, they have removed many of the trees that trail users had long enjoyed. Moreover, this year the tree removal subcontractor has developed a new tactic. Instead of removing trees, they have slashed their bark, poisoned them, and left them standing to die in place. This will create even more work for our volunteers who have been hard pressed to keep up with all the dead ash trees along the trail.

## Jerry Agin continues from page 1

"I started exploring the trail on foot," Jerry explained. "I got topographic maps of where it went. Each time I went out to explore, I discovered more trail and then got another topo so I could go farther. Pretty soon, my office wall was full of maps."

Jerry had traveled most of the trail when a friend told him about people who were organizing a trail council. He came to the second meeting and quickly became invaluable. Bill Metzger (featured in the July-August issue) wanted photos of the trail for early promotional materials, but the surface was not conducive to bike travel. Jerry offered to run on the trail with a camera.

"I got my wife to drop me off along the trail and carried the camera for 20 or 25 miles, taking photos all along the way," he recalled.

Jerry became the council's first membership chairman and held that position for 15 years, managing the database, member communications, and the Montour Trail's initial website as membership rose gradually from zero to over 700. When he gave up that role in 2004, it took three people to replace him. He also served for many years as registrar for the trail's fall half-marathon and 5K run.

In March 1993, Jerry ambitiously arranged the most unusual event ever held on the Montour Trail: a 100-kilometer "ultra" running race. Participants covered the 62 miles by running from Clairton to Coraopolis plus the Bethel Park and Westland branches—signing clipboards at the turnaround point of each branch to prove that they had gone all the way.

Fourteen people signed up for the race, but snow chased some of them away. Six runners started and three, including Jerry, finished. By ultra standards, that was a modest success, but Jerry decided not to hold the race again. Instead he arranged group long-distance running workouts that used the trail right of way.

Reflecting on his initial exposure to the trail council, Jerry said, "I thought it was a great idea. But I had no knowledge or appreciation of the legal or government side of the process. I was thinking that the whole thing would be built in five years."

When asked for a favorite memory from the early years, Jerry recalled the first trail opening, held at Cecil Park in fall 1992. The trail went east from the park at that point and a neighbor to the west was resistant to trail development, so someone posted a sign west of the completed trail reading "Do not pass beyond this point." Jerry remembers seeing the playful Bill Metzger, presumably unhappy about the restriction, add a word to change the sign to "Do not pass gas beyond this point."

"It was a worthwhile cause and a great group of people," Jerry said of his long service to the Montour Trail Council. "I was sorry to leave them behind when I retired as membership director. The trail is a wonderful addition to people's ways to stay healthy and enhances the value of the Pittsburgh region."

That's a nice compliment from the one Montour Trail original for whom the trail's successful development actually made it *less* useful to his own interests!

## Board Nominees continues from page 1

**Brad Mauersberg** has been biking the Montour Trail for over two decades and is currently active with the Membership & Community Outreach Committee. He has a background in product management, co-founded a technology startup, and practiced for 13 years as a hospital pharmacist. Brad lives in Upper St. Clair with his rescued dogs who tolerate going along for rides in their trailer.

**Dennis Pfeiffer** is a retired Assistant Vice President in Telecommunications from PNC and has been volunteering with the MTC since November of 1989. Dennis is the current MTC President, also serving that role in 2000, 2004 - 2006 and 2013 - 2014. He founded the Engineering & Construction Committee in 2000 and led our efforts to secure the MTC Bridgeville office in 2001. Since 1993 he has been active in the Airport Area Friends and has been the project manager of numerous construction projects. His two current projects are completing the Coraopolis Connector and managing construction of the planned western corridor garage located at Milepost 5.9.

**Phillip Torrez** and his family have been members of the Montour Trail Council since 2014. Phillip is a longtime cyclist and has been active as a volunteer with bicycling organizations since 1985. He is a veteran writer, editor and publications consultant, and serves on two area nonprofit boards.

See the insert and ballot for more information on the annual meeting.

## Alfred Benesch & Company Corporate Work Party, July 29, 2018 By Dennis Pfeiffer



Left to right Robbie, Matt, Dean, Darren, Tyler

On Sunday July 29, we held a corporate work party in the Airport Area with five employees from Alfred Benesch & Company. They completed grass trimming along the trail at intersections and trailheads. A hard-working crew indeed.

We have been very fortunate to work with employees of Alfred Benesch & Company in this their third year of donating time. A big thanks to Tyler Blonski who set up this and all of the previous work parties with the employees.

Note: Alfred Benesch & Company is an engineering firm with 600 employees. In addition to it's Pittsburgh, Cranberry Office they have 33 other offices nationwide.

## Westland Branch Gets a Bench By Deb Thompson

The Westland Branch now has its first bench thanks to 17-year-old Caroline McDonough. Caroline is a Senior Girl Scout who undertook the project as part of earning her Gold Award. The Gold Award represents the highest achievement in Girl Scouting, recognizing girls in grades 9 through 12 who demonstrate "extraordinary leadership." The Scouts leaders are rigorous about the requirement that the work be performed directly by the member, so this bench is truly the result Caroline's direct efforts. She didn't just install the bench, she actually built it!



The bench is located at mile 3.7 of the Westland Branch, between a grove of pine trees and babbling brook. – just 1/3 mile from the Westland trailhead.

### Caroline Summarizes her Project

My father and I have been riding our bikes together on Montour Trail since I can remember, so when I first heard that the rules for the Girl Scout Gold Award, which I hoped to receive, stipulated that my project should have a positive effect on my community, I immediately thought of the trail where I've spent so many summer hours. Having recently discovered the relatively new Westland Extension of the trail, and having so often used and appreciated the benches scattered along the more established sections of the trail, I set to work planning my own bench to add to the collection. I first enlisted a neighbor of mine who had experience with carpentry to help me with construction, and after purchasing the necessary materials, I did all measuring, cutting, sanding, painting, and assembly necessary to make my bench a reality under his supervision. With the assistance of David Hajnik, a Montour Trail volunteer, I located a spot for installation near the Westland Extension trailhead, and with a shovel, some garden tools, and a very heavy bag of cement, I installed the bench, which includes a plaque inscribed with my troop number. It is wonderful to see the bench installed and in use, and I am thankful to have the experience I gained from planning, acquiring materials, performing the work, and actually installing the bench. I'll always be grateful to everyone who helped me in this endeavor, especially Mr. Hajnik and the Montour Trail Council for generously helping me with approvals and allowing me put the final product on the trail.



## MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

**Hills Transfer Track****By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society**

At Montour Mine #4 in Peters Township, tracks diverged from the Montour main line and ran along the hillside about a half mile to connect with the Pennsylvania Railroad at its Boyce Siding. This was the Hills Transfer tracks, used to interchange freight cars with the PRR.



**This view shows the two transfer tracks. A caboose and hoppers sit on the main line in the background beyond the loaded yard. Note the bill box on a post between the main and transfer tracks.**

The east switch at the Montour main was located about where the X1 railroad crane currently sits beside the trail at mile 30. From the east switch, the transfer track ran parallel to the main (trail) until the main curves left to cross over Valley Brook Road. At this point the transfer continued along the hillside and split into two tracks. They joined again just before they met the PRR Boyce Siding. (The PRR tracks were later Penn Central, then Conrail and currently the active Pittsburgh and Ohio Central Railroad.)

The two transfer tracks were called the Creek and Hill tracks. Running along the bank of Chartiers Creek, the Creek Track was used to receive freight cars destined for the Montour and the Hill Track (against the hill) was designated as the delivery track to the PRR. Each of those two transfer tracks would hold 55 cars. The single lead track at the Montour end would hold 30 cars and could be used for cars headed in either direction if additional space was needed.

Boyce Siding ran from Chartiers Creek north past Boyce Road toward Mayview. Montour crews could access Boyce Siding directly from the transfer track without going onto the PRR main track and thus pull hopper cars left on the siding onto the Montour.

Most of the cars exchanged at Hills were coal hoppers destined for Montour #4 or #10 mines, but non-coal freight for other businesses was interchanged as well. Lumber, building supplies, chemicals, furniture and other freight went to local businesses along the Montour. A bill box was placed at each end of the transfer tracks to provide the exchange of waybills and paperwork between conductors of the two railroads.

The transfer tracks needed constant maintenance as track gangs battled Mother Nature. Rocks and dirt from the hillside would slide down, especially onto the Hill Track, and could cause derailments. Water running off the hillside would occasionally wash out the road bed on the Creek Track and in winter the water runoff would freeze into ice patches thick enough to cover the tracks, which could also cause derailments.

When the Hills shaft at Mine #4 was dug in 1914, coal was screened and cleaned at the mine tipple, loaded into hoppers for shipment and set out on the transfer and/or Boyce Siding. After the Champion Preparation Plant was built in 1928, raw coal from the mine was taken to Champion to be screened, sized, cleaned and custom mixed for final shipment. Since the PRR's Panhandle Division tracks at McDonald were much closer, most PRR coal from Champion was delivered there instead of being brought back to Hills. Thus, after 1928 most of the incoming cars at Hills were empty hoppers to be filled with coal at Mine #4 and shuttled to Champion for coal processing.

At its peak production, Montour #4 was loading over 100 cars each day. The empty and loaded yards at the mine would each hold about 75 cars, so Montour train crews were kept busy delivering empties and pulling loads out of the mine yards. Near-by Thompsonville Siding, east of Rt. 19, could be used to store up to 68 empty or loaded cars if additional space was needed. Loaded trains were typically about 44 cars and several trains a day would be needed to keep the coal moving.



**Engine 76 shoves freight cars on the Hill Track in 1980. Note rocks lying between the tracks and dirt filling the area between the rails. Photos by Roy Parkinson courtesy Gene P. Schaeffer.**

You can contact the Montour Railroad Yahoo group at [http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour\\_rr/](http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/) There are currently 355 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>



## I want to support the Montour Trail Council!

### Membership Level

- ☐ Leaders' Circle \$500 +  
☐ Benefactor \$250 - \$499  
☐ Sustaining \$100 - \$249  
☐ Supporting \$50 - \$99  
☐ Family \$35  
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## 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

Jim Cassidy  
 Patricia Condre  
 Dennis Daley  
 Jeffrey Davis  
 Robert G. Fecher  
 Tim Foley & Susan Sans  
 Kimberly Foote  
 Tom Getty  
 Christopher Kelleher Hawkins  
 Fran Hensler  
 John C. Hilzendeger  
 Patrick Houy  
 John C. Kenny  
 David Kerr  
 Erin & Michael Kotuk  
 David Kunkel  
 Annemarie Lyons  
 Jeanne & Parker May  
 Chuck Merchant  
 Judith Miller  
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 Bernard O'Keefe  
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 Cindy Piendl  
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### Leaders

Maryann Hoffman  
 Donald & Anna Marie Niemann  
 Jay & Judy Shock & Family  
 J. A. Wunderlich, III



Trail volunteer Frank D'Amico pushing boulders to clear the trail. The trail was blocked partially due to a landslide. Sketch by Mahendra Shah.

## Christmas is Coming

Winter's coming! It's not too early to think about your Christmas shopping, so remember that Montour Trail logowear and gear make great gifts! Go to [montourtrail.org/trail-store/](http://montourtrail.org/trail-store/) and click on the link for Café Press.





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## **New Publications and Signs**

Two new publications and two sets of signs are coming to the trail this fall, sponsored by the PA Dept. Of Conservation and Natural Resources and the PA Parks and Recreation Society as part of our 2017 Trail of the Year (TOTY) award.

A new Trail Safety and Etiquette brochure was published in September and rolled out to participants at the 2018 Tour the Montour. Trail volunteer John Dorman, who led the 2018 User Survey, proposed and a trail safety campaign. John reported that “survey participants who wrote in comments frequently raised issues of trail etiquette.”

John led brochure development to emphasize basic rules for trail users that make the trail safer for everyone. John worked with photographer and graphic designer Jeanine Leech to take pictures illustrating good on-trail etiquette.

You’ll start to see the brochures in the trailside information boxes. Trail users will also notice new safety signs on mileposts. In addition to reinforcing rules of trail etiquette, the signs also remind users to note milepost numbers and call 911 in event of emergency.

A large trail map and guide is the second new publication. The guide contains a variety of information valuable for trail users: amenities and GPS coordinates of each trailhead and trail junction, a mileage chart, trail rules, and a large-format map.

Three local experts contributed descriptions of the history and environment surrounding the trail. Bryan Seip, President of the Montour Railroad Historical Society, describes the railroad’s start, growth, and decline. Albert Kollar, Geologist at Carnegie Museum of Natural History describes what’s underfoot. Ephraim Zimmerman, Ecologist with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, highlights land and water ecosystems bordering the trail, and draws attention to the invasive plants that are threatening local species.

This fall trail users will also notice new signs honoring the Montour Trail as the 2017 Trail of the Year.