



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

# MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Volume 25 Issue 5

September-October 2014

## Library Viaduct Construction Update and photos by Tom Prezel



The photo shows some of the replaced steel (in gray).

In the first three months, Thornbury Inc. has made great progress on the Library Viaduct Rehabilitation. We have also had great support for construction inspection by Mackin Engineering, for engineering consultation by WEC Engineering, and contract support from PennDOT District 11-0.

During this period, all the rails and ties have been removed. The work to reduce the abutment near Route 88 is essentially complete. This has significantly improved the line of sight already for those exiting the Lindenbrooke Apartments. Rivet replacement has been completed on spans 1 through 8. The sections of the structural steel requiring sandblasting are complete and primed.



Photo shows some of the pans in place for the deck over spans 1 through 4.

Structural steel replacements have been performed on 8 of the required 9 bents along with replacement of 4 of the 6 diagonals.

Replacement of the viaduct support bearings on the two abutments are underway. Work to complete the forms for the concrete deck over spans 1 through 8 are being put in place at this time.

By the time this newsletter is ready for press, we may already have the first portion of the concrete deck poured. The contract date for completion with Thornbury is April 2015.

## Foundations Dig Deep to Complete Library Viaduct

Riders of the Great Allegheny Passage have seen signs thanking the many area foundations whose contributions helped to bring to reality the GAP as a nationally prominent trail. We have been honored to discover this year that the foundation community also holds the Montour Trail in high esteem, as three local funders awarded us a total of \$475,000 in grants for the completion of the \$2.5 million Library Viaduct.

As of fall 2013, funding goals for the Library Viaduct had not been fully met. We had been advised that the federal funding reserved for this project needed to be committed by year's end, but covering the remaining shortfall from our general funds would have severely curtailed trail maintenance and other important activities.

In October 2013, the Montour Trail Council board approved a committee to raise funds for the Library Viaduct project. MTC president Dennis Pfeiffer, past president Ned Williams, and volunteers Bruce Barron and Dave Borrebach secured invitations to meet with four major Pittsburgh foundations.

The presentations stressed that completing the vital Library Viaduct link would restore an historic and highly visible structure, provide a direct connection to the Port Authority light rail line at its park-and-ride facility, and jump start completion of the Montour Trail through South Park Township. Also pointed out was that the viaduct's rehabilitation would offer significant economic development potential as a "trail town" to Library and the greater South Park Township community.

Representatives of the Colcom Foundation, the Hillman Foundation, and the Richard King Mellon Foundation even came out to a site visit on April 11. Staff members from all three foundations braved the muddy pathway from Pleasant Street to the Viaduct's eastern end, in order to get a close-up view of the project. Their grasp of the connected vision and enthusiasm for the project seemed to build up as thickly as the mud on their suits and dress shoes. **Continues on page 3.**

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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/neo/groups/Montour-Trail/info> or

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43518292159>



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### The Prez says:

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 email or call us directly with your questions and suggestions on improving the trail at [MTOffice@montourtrail.org](mailto:MTOffice@montourtrail.org) or 412-257-3011.

The Montour Trail Council has had a very successful construction season. Of course the top priority has been the rehabilitation of the Library Viaduct in South Park Township at trail mile 35. There is another article in this newsletter presenting the details of the great progress on the Library Viaduct, but I wanted to just say a few words about the participants.

The MTC has been very fortunate to partner with a very diligent group of professionals working on the Library Viaduct project. Our general contractor, Thornbury Inc., has made great progress with excellent support for our Engineering firms WEC and Mackin. The construction support manager from PennDOT, Lori Miles, has been great in moving the project forward. Lori also is an avid trail user living in the Cecil area. Might her trail knowledge help with the project? You never know, but it's sure nice to have a trail user leading the project.

Finally the Montour Trail Council project manager Tom Prezel is to be commended in leading the MTC through this spectacular project. Tom became project manager in 2012 and has done great work in getting the project out to bid and managing many aspects of the construction. There are very few days that Tom is not on site following the project's progress.

#### 2015 Greenway Sojourn?

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the Rails to Trails Conservancy's (RTC) 2014 Greenway Sojourn spending two days on the Montour Trail in June with 315 participants. The MTC was glad to be host for a couple days and the Montour Trail seems to have been a great hit. This past week we received communications from Tom Sexton, the RTC Northeastern Executive Director. The RTC is already planning for the 2015 Sojourn and would again like to make the Montour Trail a part of the sojourn. It's a work in progress, but the current thinking is to possibly start the ride at Mile "0" on the Montour Trail. With 80 percent of the users from out of state, there is a possibility of advertising the Airport Connection as a viable means of getting to the start of the sojourn. Stay tuned for details probably in January 2015.

Tom Sexton just sent a thank you to all of the 2014 sojourn participants that he passed onto us. Here is what Tom said about the Montour Trail:

*"Thank you for being one of the 300 who helped the sojourn hit another first by joining us on rail-trails in three states! The Montour Trail and its volunteers were tops as usual—providing a pop-up bar to quench our thirst coming off the trail—not to mention hand-dipped ice cream and good music after dinner."*

Happy Trails

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 Dennis at 412-262-3748 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.

## Foundations continues from Page 1

Apparently, it clung, too. In June, we were gratified to learn that the three foundations had awarded us a larger amount than we had dared to anticipate, ensuring that we would be able to complete the viaduct on schedule while still meeting our other maintenance and operational obligations.

"The success of the Montour Trail is directly tied to the dedication of trail volunteers," commented John Rohe, Colcom's vice-president for philanthropy. "Their foresight, persistence, and cordial tenacity will enable this abandoned viaduct to serve as an iconic image and an essential link."

Along with the exemplary caliber and commitment of the MTC's volunteer leadership, the foundations cited the project's key role in completing the Montour Trail's main line, enhancing safety for trail users, and leveraging support from federal sources and donors as reasons for their unusually generous grants.

We are deeply grateful to these three foundations for embracing our vision and for their confidence in our ability to execute it. Construction on the Library Viaduct continues to progress toward an anticipated grand opening in mid-2015.

## Bi-monthly Photo Contest Winner

This month's award of priceless Montour Trail paraphernalia for an outstanding photo taken along our Trail goes to Geralyn Perrotti. Despite the excellent efforts of a number of other trail users, her photo of teasels glimmering in the sunlight captured the judges' hearts. Congratulations Geralyn! And thank you to all who submitted photos for this bi-monthly contest. You can see all of the interesting photos that were submitted at <http://www.montourtrail.org/>. The contest is now re-opened



until the next newsletter deadline and you can enter your own by going to the address above and clicking on the "Enter the Contest" link. So go through those pictures you took this summer or get that camera out and start snapping!

*Dipsacus is a genus of flowering plant in the family Dipsacaceae, members of this genus are known as teasel, teazel or teazle. Dipsacus fullonum. You may have someone say they are a thistle, but I assure you they are not the Canadian thistle, they are teasels.*



## Results of the UPMC Urgent Care 1/2 Marathon and 5K

PLACE	FINISHER	TIME
<b>Men</b>		
1	Heath Piper, Eighty Four, PA	18:06
2	Zachary Queen, Pittsburgh, PA	19:05
3	Jimmy Thomson, Imperial, PA	19:38
<b>Women</b>		
1	Lisa Lucas, Pittsburgh, PA	18:28
2	Gillian Livingston, Pittsburgh, PA	20:25
3	Annie Wicker, Sewicley, PA	20:32

### Half Marathon

PLACE	FINISHER	TIME
<b>Open Men</b>		
1	Daniel Spaulding, Valencia, PA	1:13:42
2	Tommy Rudewstey, Verona, PA	1:15:40
3	Matt Robson, Latrobe, PA	1:16:56
4	David Gates, Stafford, VA	1:18:38
5	Steve Spang, Belle Vernon, PA	1:21:40
<b>Open Women</b>		
1	Leigh Ciofani, Bridgeville, PA	1:29:35
2	Natalie Eaton, Aliquippa, PA	1:35:08
3	Kaitlyn Kacsuta, Pittsburgh, PA	1:36:09
4	Debbie Conner, Dunbar, PA	1:37:08
5	Amy Moody, Greensburg, PA	1:39:02

Results courtesy of [www.runhigh.com](http://www.runhigh.com)



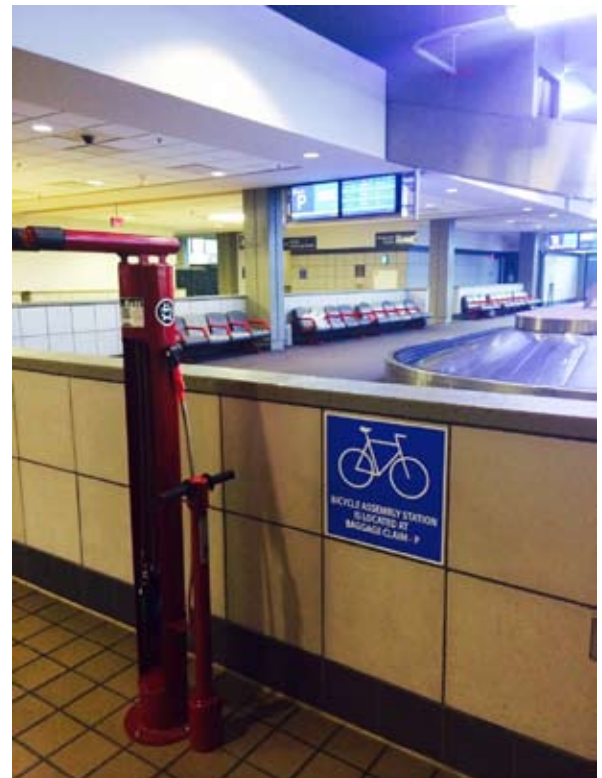
*Runners crossing Cliff Mine Road during the 1/2 Marathon.  
Photo by Dino Angelici*

## Pittsburgh International Airport Installs Bike Assembly Station by Dave Borrebach

Bicycle riders who fly into or out of Pittsburgh International Airport link to the Montour Trail and the Great Allegheny Passage via a connecting route first opened in 2012. The Airport recently made this process easier for riders by installing a bike assembly station in Baggage Claim P.

The Airport simultaneously enhanced the first leg of the connector trail, giving it a new asphalt surface and guiderails. Cyclists access the refurbished trail at the end of the moving walkway past the Hyatt Hotel and straight ahead through the extending parking area.

Jim Gill, the Acting Executive Director of the Allegheny County Airport Authority commented "We are pleased to offer this new amenity for those traveling with bicycles and for those who wish to ride their bikes conveniently to and from the airport via the Montour Trail."



## Trail Volunteer: Paul McKeown

Around 25 years ago, Paul McKeown had the frightful experience of trying to ride his bicycle to Century III Mall on shoulder-less Lebanon Church Road. When he heard later that the road was due for an upgrade, Paul phoned PENNDOT and asked if it would add a shoulder for bicyclists and pedestrians. The reply: "There's no demand."



*Paul McKeown in one of his many volunteer roles, as lead biker for the Burgh's Run on the Montour Trail.*

Paul knew better (why else would there be a path worn in the grass on the north side of the road?) but refused to let this rebuff discourage him. Instead, his technical skills, strategic thinking, and tireless information gathering have made him one of the Montour Trail Council's most versatile and productive volunteers.

Originally from Auburn, Mass., Paul came to the Pittsburgh area in 1979 to work as a mechanical engineer at the Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory in West Mifflin. He did his first major bike ride—from his home near Worcester to Portland, Maine and back—at age 14. In Massachusetts, Paul was accustomed to biking wherever he wanted; in Pittsburgh he discovered that "you'd better think about which direction you're going because on some roads you can get killed."

Although he still does most of his bicycling on roads, Paul was quick to recognize the value of trail development in encouraging bicycle use and making the region bike-friendly. "Cycling's progress in the last 15 years around here has a lot to do with trails," Paul observed. "Many of the people who ride on trails also ride on roads to get there."

Paul was an MTC work party volunteer and served two terms as a board member in the 1990s, but he gravitated toward serving where his engineering and analytical skills were most needed. He is recording secretary for the Engineering and Construction Committee and has contributed his technical expertise to numerous projects. Most recently, he wrote the requests for proposals and managed the selection processes for the pre-design inspection and for the engineering design work on the Library Viaduct.

In addition, for the past 10 years every e-mail inquiry to the MTC's general address ([info@montourtrail.org](mailto:info@montourtrail.org)) has gone to Paul, who draws on his precise and encyclopedic knowledge of both trails and roads to give highly detailed, informative answers. Ask about lodging options on the Montour Trail and Great Allegheny Passage and you'll get Paul's document of frequently asked questions on how to handle the trip. Ask about the difficulty of the new connector trail to South Park, and you'll get a thorough summary of the challenging topography, backed up with an electronic record of Paul's heart rate when he rode it.

In a decade of fielding about one e-mail per day, one of

Paul's most memorable interactions was with a young man from Ohio who wanted to bike to his mother's home in North Carolina. "He was thinking of going through West Virginia, and I told him not to try it because he'd end up on wiggly rural roads with no cell phone service. I routed him down the Great Allegheny Passage to the East Coast Greenway to within 20 miles of his mother's house, and I also helped him reduce the weight that he'd be carrying to below 30 pounds. He did the trip successfully and wrote afterwards to say thank you."

Ask Paul what the Montour Trail means to him and you get a typically detailed, multifaceted answer. "Sometimes I don't want to do hills, and a trail is one of the few places where I can avoid them. Sometimes I want a mixture, like today when I rode from home (near South Hills Village) to Hendersonville on roads and came back on the trail. If I want a daydreaming ride where I don't have to pay attention to motor vehicle traffic, I can ride on a rural trail. And rail-trails are the best place for my wife, Bonnie, and me to ride our tandem bike."

Paul is currently training heavily for a bike tour from San Francisco to San Diego with Adventure Cycling. But for him the trail is much more than a place for workouts: "It's also my community service. To maximize your benefit to the community, you have to work within your talents, and my talents are in engineering. On my paying job, I write a lot of technical things, so that enables me to do it well for the MTC."

As part of the E&C Committee brain trust, Paul is in a unique position to observe one of the MTC's most precious resources. "This is by far the most talented group of people I have ever worked with in a volunteer setting," he said. "Everyone on the committee is donating professional skills of tremendous value. What we do as volunteers in trail engineering, construction, and maintenance would be unimaginable for other organizations."

But Paul is also careful to assure less technically inclined supporters that they can still be useful. "We have so many different functions, there are always things you can do. It doesn't take specialized skill to help at a running event. No matter when you are available, you can fit a volunteer role around your schedule."

Thank you, Paul, for making the MTC part of your life for more than 20 years!

## Pedal Pittsburgh Booth

by Pete Merther



On August 24, 2014 representatives of the Montour Trail, Don Thobaben and Pete Merther, set-up an information booth at the Pedal Pittsburgh Event. We were able to answer many questions concerning the new construction taking place and the ability of connecting to the Great Allegheny Passage and other trails. We also handed out brochures for the Tour the Montour. It was a great day spreading the word of the trail. *Photo Credit, Dave Borrebach*

## MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

## The Wreck of Engine 76

By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

Although there were many derailments on the Montour Railroad over the years, most of these incidents caused no significant damage or injuries. The slow speed of Montour coal trains limited the scope of any such accident. Many derailments were caused by wide gauge, where heavy tonnage would push the tracks too far apart and the car wheels would drop down between the rails and onto the ties. Occasionally a broken rail would cause a coal hopper or two to overturn, spilling their loads along the right-of-way, but very few injuries occurred.



*A runaway flat car with an earth mover aboard collided with engine 76. Note the impression of the earth mover's front bumper in 76's body and radiator. Charles A. Ross photo*

its big diesel engine was dislodged and the long hood was pushed into the cab. Thankfully, no one was injured and, amazingly, nothing even derailed, but 76 was badly damaged.

The accident investigation determined that a crew of men, working at McAdams Siding a mile or so up the line, had been preparing to unload the earth mover to deliver it to a local coal stripping company. The men were moving the flat car uphill on the siding, using a large truck to pull the rail car with a cable. Something went wrong and the cable became detached. The flat car started rolling back down the siding with no one aboard to secure the hand brake and stop the car. It rolled over a switch and out onto the main line, heading downhill eastbound on the main track until it met the westbound coal train.

After the accident, Engine 76 was taken to Montour Junction and later moved to the McKees Rocks shops of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad, where it was rebuilt using both new and used parts and accessories. It was returned to the Montour Railroad in early 1976, ready to resume service, but in need of a final coat of paint, which was to be applied by the Montour shops.

As this was the Bicentennial year, several Montour employees suggested 76 should be painted with a Bicentennial theme. Montour employees came up with a paint scheme and the 76 was painted red, white and blue with stars along the cab and hood. When 76 was returned to service in 1976 it was intended to be used as a showcase engine to lead trains, but the train crews quickly found out it was noisy and had severe vibrations which gave the crew a rough ride. Thereafter, the crews usually requested that #76 be buried as the second or third unit of a locomotive consist. #76 continued to work on the Montour until 1981, when the entire fleet of diesel locomotives was retired and sold.

Thanks go to Gene Schaeffer, Robert J. Lane, Tim Sposato and the late Chuck Ross, ex-Montour employees who contributed information and pictures to this report.



*Painted in a Bicentennial theme, a rebuilt engine 76 was returned to service in 1976. Charles A. Ross photo*

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 339 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

Cheryl & David Alessi  
Elaine Becker  
Kristin & Keith Biehl  
William Dewitt  
Marsha Hancock  
Carl Hanford  
Rolf C. Hilden  
Ted & Shannon Hunter  
Timothy Klitz  
Jack Kun  
Sharon Traumiller  
Elizabeth & Preston Walsh  
Alex Williams  
Carolyn & Roy Yarrington

### Benefactors

Gay Canough  
Daniel J. Hirsh  
Dave & Veronica Mattson  
David Mueller  
Jim & Brenda Quasey  
John & Mary Jo Wasco

### Leaders

David Borrebach & Margaret Kinsky  
John Dorman  
Janet McKinney

## Eagle Scout Project Adds History Signage by Bryan Seip

Four new interpretive signs depicting aspects of the history of the Montour Railroad were recently erected along the Montour Trail in Peters Township.

Troop 1313 Eagle Scout candidate Ian Sopko created, built and, with help from several fellow scouts, installed the signs beside the trail. They are located between mileposts 29.6 and 30.1, near the old Montour Mine #4 site. They depict the history of Kamp's Cut, the Hills Station General Stores, the Hills Water Tank and the demise of the Montour Railroad in this area.

Ian's project was coordinated by the Peters Township Friends of the Montour Trail with assistance from the Montour Railroad Historical Society.



*Family members and scouts from Troop 1313 assist Eagle Scout candidate Ian Sopko with the installation of a new interpretive sign near trail milepost 30.*

## I want to help complete the Montour Trail!

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Leader's Circle	\$500+

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#### Don't Forget

The Montour Trail Council may be designated as your United Way Contributor Choice as option #3308.



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## **Groundbreaking for Valley Brook Bridge #2**

You are invited to attend the ground breaking ceremony for the Valley Brook Bridge #2 project on Sunday, October 12. The event starts at 1:00 PM and should last less than an hour. It will be held next to the site on the property of trail neighbor Tom Robinson, accessed via his driveway at 150 Valley Brook Road, McMurray, PA 15317. Light refreshments will be provided. In addition to short presentations by government, agency and MTC officials, progress in nearby trail projects will also be covered.

Attendees looking for a bit of exercise are encouraged to park at nearby St. Petersburg Center or the Sanitary Authority trail head and walk or bike the few hundred yards to the ceremony.

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## **Update – Mile “0” Trail Head Is Closed**

The cleanup of hazardous materials at the Superfund site at mile zero is well underway. Thus, the trail from mile “0” to “0.5” and the trail head at mile “0” will remain closed for the most part until October 23. In the early fall, there is a possibility for some Sunday openings and the trail was opened for the Tour the Montour on September 20.

Please see website for more detailed information.