



The Official Publication of the Montour Trail Council

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

Celebrating 30 Years

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The Originals: Stan Sattinger

by Bruce Barron



Montour Trail Council co-founders Stan Sattinger (left) and Dino Angelici are still avid bikers. This photo shows them arriving in Pensacola, Florida after three days of biking from New Orleans in spring 2006.

In 1989, as the idea of forming a Montour Trail Council was gaining steam, Stan Sattinger and wife Jerry took a hike on what had been the Montour Railroad. The steel from the rails and the railroad ties worth salvaging had been removed, leaving a rough linear wasteland of unlevelled ballast.

"This is too much," Stan sighed as he surveyed the unfriendly landscape. "How is this ever going to become a recreational trail?"

"It's meant to be," Jerry replied calmly. "It'll happen."

In retrospect, Stan says, "It's amazing how much of a spiritual lift you can get from a prognostication like Jerry's."

That encouragement, buttressed by a trainload of determination and self-confidence, kept Stan going as he co-founded the Montour Trail Council and guided the Montour Trail to realization.

Stan liked biking and he really liked trains. In the 1970s, he was a volunteer crew member on a steam locomotive that pulled tourist excursions around southwest Pennsylvania. A Westinghouse engineer, Stan helped to build a replacement set of "superheaters," which add extra energy to the steam, for that locomotive's boiler.

He and Jerry had also gone on several outings with the American Youth Hostels' Pittsburgh Council. Through that connection, they learned that the AYH had tasked a dentist named Dino Angelici with pursuing the development of at least one rails-to-trails project in the Pittsburgh area.

Stan and Dino participated in various discussions about turning the Montour Railroad right of way into a trail, but it was all just talk until the two of them agreed, in Stan's words, to "take the bull by the horns, hold an organizational meeting, and see where it goes."

That meeting drew two dozen people, including many of the eventual founding board members. Stan laid down one ground rule: the organization would focus solely on the Montour.

Continues on page 4.

Nominees to the MTC Board of Directors

During the Montour Trail Council annual meeting this November—see the separate flyer—MTC members will elect new Board members for the 2020–2022 term. There are five nominees.

Jen Mosesso is nominated for her second term on the Board. Jen is an attorney and partner at Steptoe & Johnson PLLC in Southpointe where she focuses on real estate and energy law. She is active in the MTC's Real Estate Committee and works to assure that real estate transactions are in the MTC's interest. Jen lives in Moon Township with her husband Andy, and sons Jude and Luke.

Jim Richter recently retired after a career leading local non-profit organizations. He was a founding Trustee of the Bethel Park Community Foundation, board member of the Bethel Soccer Association and member of the Municipal Parks and Recreation Board. Jim studied Public Administration at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, English Literature at Pitt, and concert violin at Duquesne University. Jim has been active with the Montour Trail Council for three years and is chair of the Friends Groups Engagement and Enhancement Committee. Jim is nominated for his first term as a MTC board member. **Continues on page 4.**

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www.montourtrail.org
To converse go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/43518292159>

or

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



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The Prez Sez: New Residents, New Blood for the Trail

From its creation 30 years ago, the Montour Trail has sought to connect to communities, bringing new forms of recreation and new modes of transportation to long-established towns and residential areas. Over time, our neighbors have come to greatly enjoy having the trail close enough to walk the dog, take a stroll, or easily get to it on a bicycle.

The Montour Trail has become such a draw that new communities are being built for residents who want to live trailside. Two such residential communities are currently under construction, and the positive implications for the trail can scarcely be overstated. The trail strongly appeals to millennials who enjoy an active lifestyle, while older and retired residents seek relaxed recreation, nature and the outdoors.

Some of these new residents will take an active interest in Montour Trail affairs by volunteering, participating in trailside maintenance, and even getting involved in council activities and eventually positions of leadership.

The all-residential McConnell Trails development in Cecil Township (Washington County) is about a half-mile west of the newly-refurbished National Tunnel, on the former McConnell farm. It's on both sides of the trail, so the developer has built a bridge to carry the new connecting road over the trail. The roads are in for phase 1, and model single and adjoined homes are up. Plans show 139 single family and 130 adjoined townhomes to be built in three phases over the next couple of years.

Worthy of note is that it will be a pretty short bicycle commute on the Montour Trail from the McConnell community to the Southpointe business park.

The mixed-use Summit Station development in Library, South Park Township (Allegheny County), is about a half-mile east of the recently-opened Library Viaduct. It's on the site of the former Consol mine and research campus on Brownsville-Library Road, immediately adjacent to the planned route of the trail.

The developer has built a sturdy and attractive trail bridge to carry the main line of the Montour Trail over Summit's entrance road. Two 90-unit apartment buildings and the first townhomes are up; plans call for 80 single family and 86 townhomes to be built, also in three phases over the next couple of years. In addition, there will be some small and large retail and other buildings, to serve residents. The key to Summit Station is its location at the Library station of the Port Authority's light rail line, allowing it to be designated as a transit-oriented development.

With the adjacent Montour Trail, residents and commuters will have many choices to get Downtown or to other areas in the suburbs without having to get into their cars, an option valued by younger people. We are excited to be such an integral component of this trail and transit hub, which is something unique to this region. **Continues on page 5**

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 Friday 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 Wayne Pfrimmer at 724-747-9766 or by email at waynepfrimmer@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 second 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.

National Tunnel Get a New Layer of Asphalt by Dennis Sims, photos by Bill Volber

On August 29, a fresh layer of asphalt was placed on the pathway in the National Tunnel by T.A. Robinson. After a couple of springs of ice removal preceding the Burgh and National Tunnel Races, the surface had become rutted with teeth-marks from the backhoe used to chip away the winter's accumulation of ice mostly at the west portal.

Some of the leftover asphalt was used to fill the holes in the entrance to the Kurnick Trailhead.

Now that the tunnel gets closed up for the winter to prevent ice accumulation and to protect the tunnel from further winter damage, spring-time ice removal is no longer required.

The late Frank Ludwin oversaw the original paving in July of 2008. A seven-inch base of asphalt was placed in the tunnel with the help of Cecil Twp. DPW after volunteers prepared the base.



Stan Sattinger continues from Page 1

Other abandoned rail lines, like the one that would become the Youghiogheny Trail, were also of interest, but Stan and Dino knew that just developing the Montour would be enough to keep them busy.

Stan was a fantastic nonprofit organization leader—despite his background, not because of it. “Engineering education doesn’t teach nonprofit leadership,” he noted. “If you had told me I was going to be a civic leader, I would have laughed you right out of the office. I just fell into the job and learned through the school of hard knocks, though I had some good knocks too.”

Indeed, quite a few good knocks. With full support from his boss at Westinghouse, Stan worked a flexible schedule that permitted daytime trail planning work. (As a district aide for a freshman congressman in 1991, I can remember Stan visiting our office to educate us about the Montour Trail.) Psychologically, the big turning point came the day he picked up the mail and discovered the first grant check from a foundation. “You can’t imagine the elation when I opened the envelope and saw the amount,” Stan recalled.

The quality of the leadership team forming around him was another source of encouragement. (Stan will share stories about members of that team in his 30th anniversary message at the Montour Trail Council’s annual dinner on November 17.) In addition, Stan felt great indebtedness to two trail-building predecessors: Peters Township, which began developing the Arrowhead Trail in the mid-1980s under recreation director Joanne Nelson, and Ohiopyle State Park. “The Arrowhead Trail gave us something to point at and show people it could be done,” he observed, “and many people had already experienced and appreciated the trail at Ohiopyle.”

Trail originals consistently chuckle about the initial Montour Trail concept plan, which envisioned completing the job in three years. That was totally unrealistic, but as Stan pointed out, “If we had said back then that it would take 25 years, that might have dampened some enthusiasm. And the fact that it came to fruition in increments was a constant reminder to others to get with the program.”

Regardless of the time frame, Stan’s impact was noticed not just locally but as far away as his alma mater of Georgia Tech, where he received the Dean Griffin Community Service Award in 2007 for “working tirelessly to improve recreational opportunities and protect natural resources in western Pennsylvania.”

Stan served on the Montour Trail board for 18 years, but in 2000, with the Montour Trail’s management in good hands, he resumed his pioneer role, founding the Montour Run Watershed Association. His civic efforts have continued since he and Jerry relocated to Minneapolis in 2010 to live near a daughter and son-in-law. Stan performed energy assessments of buildings for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency until last year, and his newest mission is to promote regenerative agriculture.

“That means using the right farming practices to sequester more carbon from the atmosphere into the soil,” Stan explained enthusiastically. “Other benefits include the greatly enhanced

nutritional value of foods and increased retention of rainwater in the soil.”

The topic driving Stan’s advocacy efforts has changed several times, but the passion and energy that enabled him to leave a lasting mark where the Montour Railroad once chugged are clearly still there. We are all blessed that he chose to make the Montour Trail his first big project.

Stan Sattinger will be the guest speaker at the Montour Trail Council’s annual dinner on Sunday night, November 17. Don’t miss the chance to hear our inspiring co-founder as he returns to Pittsburgh. See insert for ticket information.

Nominees continue from Page 1

Dave Tetrick is an avid user of the trail. He’s finishing his first term as a MTC board member, and is actively involved with the MTC’s Real Estate Committee working on easements, acquisitions, and encroachments. Dave works at Huntington Bank and serves as the Senior Vice President of Commercial Real Estate for Western PA and WV. Dave lives in Upper St. Clair and has two teenage daughters.

Don Thobaben is nominated for his fourth term on the Board and is active on the Executive, Membership & Community Outreach, Engineering & Construction, Operations, and Camping Committees. Don is an adventurous biker and a great source for information about local and national bike trails. Since retiring as Administrative Manager at Graybar Electric, Don works in customer service at Aero Tech Designs Cyclewear in Coraopolis. Don and his wife Jackie live in Mt. Lebanon.

Deb Thompson has served on the MTC Board since 2017 and sits on the Operations and Technology Committees. Prior to retirement, Deb held leadership positions in an environmental consulting firm. She was MTC’s webmaster and served as chair of the Technology Committee from 2004 to 2018. Deb resides in Scott Township with her husband, Dave Hajnik, and enjoys cycling, hiking, and wildflower photography. Her website, myWildflowers.com, includes nearly 2,100 photos of over 430 species of flowers from trails of the northeastern U.S.

Thank You Scouts

Cub scout pack 1365 from Hickory PA held their annual hike and garbage pickup starting at Galati Road on August 25th! After the pickup they posed for a group photo on the Southview Road Bridge beam



Preserving Nature While Hiking the Montour Trail

The Montour Trail's vantage offers expansive views of the local landscape, and all are welcome to enjoy it. But on the other hand, even the biggest outdoor enthusiasts may run the risk of harming the environment while on the trail. If we want to continue to enjoy and use the trail for many years to come, we must be conscious of our actions.

There are some things you may do unknowingly while using the trail that could be harmful to the wildlife and surrounding nature. So, here are some of the best ways to preserve nature while using the Montour Trail.

Tip #1: Take it in, Pack It Out

Try to keep in mind the saying "Never leave any trace." All trash should be packed out, stored in your bag or in a pocket, to be recycled at a later time. You shouldn't even leave something compostable behind, like a banana peel or an apple core. Would you like to see someone else's rotting apple core on the trail? Probably not.

Something to consider for your future visits to the trail is to bring a reusable water bottle. It's eco-friendly and it makes it a lot easier for you because you don't have to worry about where to put your plastic bottle.

Tip #2: Don't Feed the Animals

While it's exciting to see animals on your hike, it's usually best to watch them from a distance. Don't disturb the wildlife (even snakes!), and never feed them. This helps to ensure that the animal will not get sick, and it helps them stick to their hibernation or migration routines.

Tip #3: Keep a Dog on a Leash

While dogs are some of the best hiking companions you could ever ask for, they aren't always on their best behaviors. You should always have your dog on a leash (maximum 6 feet) in case you find something that may tempt your dog to run away, like another dog or a squirrel. Be sure that you keep your and your dog to the right of the trail to avoid any potential collisions with other trail users.

No one wants to see waste when they are walking the trail -- it's unsightly and unsanitary. So, don't forget to bring those doggie bags and take any dog waste out with you. Keep the trail clean for others to enjoy, too!

Tip #4: Stay on the Trail

The most important rule is to stay on the trail while you're hiking. This is important for the safety of others as well as preserving the natural setting. Regardless of the type of path, location, or mode of transportation, it is important that everyone walk/run/hike/bike on the trails when they travel.

The trail is maintained for your safety and enjoyment. But when you venture off the trail, there are unseen hazards. The ground

can easily become slippery or covered with harmful plants and rocks. This can lead to injuries, and if you need help it might be hard for a rescue team to locate you. Hiking and riding off an established trail may also damage the trail itself.

So have fun but be safe. We all want you to return another day to enjoy the trail again.

(This article was provided by www.personalinjury-law.com, an organization dedicated to providing the public with information about personal injury and safety information. Nothing in this article should be construed as legal advice, and it is intended for informational use only.)

Raising the Ceiling on East Cecil

The quiet "East Cecil" section of the Trail from the I-79 underpass to the Chartiers Creek bridge is now much more hospitable to volunteer mowers like John Hooton and Vince Gaughn. Starting at 9 a.m. Dave Hajnik, Vince Gaughn, Pete Merther and John Wasco attacked the thorn growth alongside the Trail. John Hooton drove the pickup so they could also reach the drooping overheads. We say "You're Welcome" to the cyclists. Workers are pictured below. Left to right: John Wasco, Dave Hajnik, J. Peter Merther, John Hooton and Vince Gaughn.

Together, they liberated 5 miles of Trail to Chartiers Creek Bridge. Two pole saws were a major help. All this in three hours, topped off with a "pizza break". Will we have to do this again next year?"



The Prez Sez continues from Page 2

With McConnell Trails and Summit Station, we will experience a lot of new trail users in the years to come. It will be these folks who have made a major investment in a new home on the Montour Trail, because it's an asset they appreciate and value. To those of us who have been taking care of the trail for many years, these new neighbors represent a well-spring of fresh talent, energy, and ideas that we can direct towards the well-being and growth of the trail. This new blood will, over time, strongly invigorate our future.

Many thanks to Phillip Torrez, who helped to write this piece.

Ned Williams

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

Montour Memories - The Brush Run Bridge**By Tim Sposato - Montour Railroad Historical Society & former Montour RR employee**

Where the Bethel Section of the Trail crosses Brush Run Road in Peters Township, it goes up an earthen ramp, crosses the road and continues down another ramp on the other side. While the Montour Railroad was in operation, this was a cut in the hillside, with a steel and timber bridge carrying the roadway over the tracks. After the railroad ceased operations the bridge was removed and the cut was filled with dirt to carry the roadway. Former Montour employee Tim Sposato recalls several stories about this old bridge.

This overhead bridge was located just around the curve east of Library Junction. I first discovered this aging structure when I was in 7th grade, while exploring the railroad right-of-way with a classmate.



A coal train passes under the Brush Run Road bridge in 1952, with engine 25 pushing hard on the rear of the train. Note the shadow of the bridge and its railing to the left of the coal hopper. Photo courtesy Bill Poellot, Jr.

The old bridge was rickety, the deck boards always loose. Bicycles would bounce wildly across them and the structure shivered and clattered as cars or trucks crossed. Lots of rust with little paint left, as she weathered out those final years.

This bridge used to have a bull rope tied under it, where the young and daring could swing from side to side, clearing the rails by about 5 feet. It was scary. The roadbed under the bridge was constantly littered with, you name it, washing machines, chairs, a couch, shattered TV's, broken beer and wine bottles, tin cans, rugs, old toys.....shall I continue?

A Monastery was located on Rocky Ridge above the bridge. This was a great source of curiosity for us youngsters as we would sneak around the place looking for the Holy Ghost Fathers. Once we got caught and the kindly Father took us in for a visit and some cold lemonade.

The first curve east of the bridge heading toward Bethel Park had a few homes next to the tracks. An elderly lady would occasionally appear on daylight runs with a homemade pie in her hands to hand up to the crew in the caboose as it rattled past. The crews would watch for her and the engine crew would radio back to the caboose if they saw her coming. I rode a few trips when this occurred, apple or cherry pies as I recall. The cherry was the best.

I hired onto the Montour after graduating high school and one hot summer day, we were hi-railing west in the track gang truck and stopped briefly near the bridge. I crossed around the back of the truck and spotted a rather large black snake coiled on the rocks. With a quick grab, I caught him and circled back around the truck. Foreman John Schmidt grinned broadly as I motioned that I would scare fellow gang members Bob Beck and Mark Broskey, who were waiting in the rear seat. As I opened the door, snake first, Mark screamed and frantically climbed over Bob's lap and fell head first out the truck window. Bob couldn't open the door because of Mark's body passing by, so he threw his hands up and hollered very loudly. I got worried after Mark disappeared and retreated with the snake. Those two guys were extremely sore at me, as Pete Williams and John roared with laughter.

Finally, the attached image was the last time a weed sprayer killed vegetation between Library Junction and Coverdale. I worked as the railroad's pilot on the truck as I had done a few times before. We stopped at the bridge to dispose of (burn) the chemical bags and felt this was the time to memorialize the scene. A year later these tracks were out of service and then abandoned.



A weed sprayer hi-rail truck pauses near the Brush Run Road bridge, 1980. Tim Sposato photo.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Historical Society through Facebook by searching for the Montour Railroad Historical Society. There are currently 347 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!

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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

Jennifer Avolio
 Sami Lynn Barry
 Beinhauer Family Foundation
 Eric Beiswenger
 Arlene Boehm
 Laura Boelter
 Karen Brock
 Mark Cappelb
 Patricia Chioda
 Rick Cox
 Thomas DeSimone
 Joyce Dunlap
 Thomas D'Uva
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Beinhauer Family Foundation
 Richard J. & Martha Munsch
 Jay & Judy Shock & Family
 Jim & Nancy Starr
 J.A.Wunderlich, III



The votes are in: Hundreds of thousands of Pittsburghers cast their votes ... and named our Montour Trail as Pittsburgh Magazine's Best in the Burgh!

<https://www.pittsburghmagazine.com/Pittsburgh-Magazine/July-2019/Readers-Poll-Winners/index.php?cparticle=5&siarticle=4&requiressl=true#art>



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30th Anniversary Celebration Dinner and Meeting

This year's MTC annual dinner meeting is far more than a 2019 wrap-up. We will commemorate the Montour Trail Council's 30th anniversary on Sunday, November 17, at St. Joan of Arc Church in Library, PA starting at 5:00 p.m.. On this milestone occasion, we will honor and celebrate the MTC's founding Board of Directors.

Stan Sattinger, a co-founder of the MTC and our first president, will give an entertaining keynote address, "Beginnings of the Montour Trail: the Who, the How, the..." The Trail's founders developed a clear vision for the beneficial use for the abandoned Montour Railroad. Stan's stories will answer questions of how the Trail came into being: How would the vision be spread? Who would acquire the property? How would the Trail be built? Who would fund it? Once built, would it be worth all the effort that went into engineering it? Would anyone bother to use it? Stan is hoping to share some memories with you! And you are welcome to share your memories with us!

Founding Board member Tim Killmeyer will debut his video "The Montour Trail Then and Now." Tim's presentation illustrates what the abandoned railroad right-of-way was like in 1989, when the founders formed their vision for the trail, and contrasts that reality with what the Trail has become. Tim is well known for his "Time Travel with Tim" videos, which can be seen at tinyurl.com/timetravelwithtim. Dinner will be prepared by Cyd West Catering. MTC member and dedicated home vintner Mary Williams will provide tasty wines. Make your reservation now using the form attached to this Trail-Letter or travel to <https://montourtrail.org/wpSupport/events/2019%20MTCAnnualDinnerInvite.pdf>