

Volume 31 Issue 5

September-October 2020

MTC Board Nominees

Compiled by Dave Borrebach

The Montour Trail Council Board of Directors has nominated the following members for election to the Board for the 2021 – 2023 term. Each Montour Trail Council member is entitled to vote for the nominees. Results will be tabulated and announced at the virtual annual meeting on Sunday, November 1 at 7p.m. (see page 4).

Fran Hensler is an avid outdoor enthusiast, notably as a cyclist. A long-time Trail supporter and occasional MTC volunteer since the 2000s, she stepped up service a few years ago and participates in the operations and membership/communications committees. Fran played a leading role making the Montour Trail website user-friendly, continuing today by providing info that is easy to access and relevant to the user community -- a skill she honed over a lifetime career in marketing communications. Her home office is located in Brentwood.

Dave Jackel is an avid trail user and has been active with the MTC for several years. A 2019 Outstanding Volunteer Award recipient, Dave is a member of the South Hills Friends group and the E&C committee. He devotes many hours each month to routine trail maintenance and improvements including serving as assistant project manager for Phase 8F construction in South Park. Prior to retiring in 2018, Dave was a Mechanical Engineer, Engineering Manager, and Project Director at the Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory. Dave and his wife Theresa live in South Park Township.

Mark Modispacher is an avid trail rider and MTC member. A current Board member, he is also currently serving as Vice President of the Airport

Inside this issue:

Board Nominees	1
The Prez Sez	2
Friends Groups	3
Annual Meeting via Zoom	4
Eagle Project at Galati Tour the Montour	5
Montour Railroad History:Company Stores	6
New Members	7
Trail Map	8

Visit the Montour Trail Web Site at: www.montourtrail.org To converse go to: https://www.facebook.com/ groups/43518292159 Area Friends group. He devotes many hours each month performing routine trail maintenance items and coordinating special projects involving Boy Scouts, corporate work parties, and individuals.

David Oyler began volunteering with the Montour Trail Council in 2001 and he's served as a Board member for 15 years since 2004. Dave is a founding member of the South Hills Friends and is currently its Secretary/ Treasurer. He has been a member of the Engineering & Construction Committee since 2003 and has been the project manager for two completed and two current trail construction projects. Dave and his wife Anne live in South Park Township.

Tom Prezel has volunteered with the Montour Trail for over 22 years. He has been the Co-Chair of the Engineering and Construction Committee for ten years where he served as the MTC Project Manager for the JR Taylor Memorial Bridge, the Library Viaduct, and Piney Fork Road Projects. Tom has been a Board member for nine years and served as the MTC Vice-President for five years. Tom was a Mechanical Engineer and Engineering Manager at the Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory for 39 years prior to retiring in 2006. Tom and his wife Linda live in Bethel Park.

Julian Wolfe was born and raised in the Washington, DC area; Julian grew up walking, running, and cycling the Chesapeake and Ohio towpath in Georgetown and suburban Maryland. He relocated to the Pittsburgh area in 2004 after assignments overseas for the US government and recently retired after 32 years in the foreign service community. Julian is a member of the Montour Trail Membership and Community Outreach committee, a crew member of the Capp maintenance battalion, and secretary of the Westland Friends. He resides in Upper St. Clair with his wife, two children, and two cats.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ned Williams Phillip Torrez Braden Ditch Deb Thompson	President Vice-President Treasurer Secretary
len Mosesso	2020-2022
lim Richter	2020-2022
Dave Tetrick	2020-2022
Don Thobaben	2020-2022
Deb Thompson	2020-2022
Braden Ditch	2019-2021
Patricia Friedsam	2019-2021
Mark Imgrund	2019-2021
Jack Kun	2019-2021
Dennis Pfeiffer	2019-2021
Phillip Torrez	2019-2021
Dave Borrebach	2018-2020
Mark Modispacher	2018-2020
Peter Kohnke	2018-2020
David Oyler	2018-2020
Tom Prezel	2018-2020
Ned Williams	2018-2020

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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All other trail correspondence should be addressed: MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL Suite #3 2nd Floor **304 Hickman Street** Bridgeville, PA 15017

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL PHONE NUMBER 412-257-3011

Administrative Manager Phyllis McChesney MTCoffice@montourtrail.org

NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM

Dennis Pfeiffer

Dennis Sims, managing editor

Mark Imgrund

In the Summer that Wasn't, We Sure Were

As we move into the Fall season, some could choose to look back glumly over the Summer that Wasn't, and bemoan all the concerts, trips, festivals, and gatherings that did not happen. And name all the friends we didn't get to see or spend time with on all those long, warm, beautiful days. Fortunately for us, the trails were one place where some of those friends could be found; where at times there were more people than we had ever seen before. For parks and trails everywhere and the Montour in particular, this was the summer that WAS.

Even allowing for a few recent summers being pretty rainy, trail use everywhere was way up this year - more than double in some places. Trailheads were packed, with cars parked all over the road shoulders. Everyone was eager to get outside in the fresh air and get some good healthy exercise. Yes, there were some people who hadn't been on a bike in a long time, folks trying to walk or run too far, and trail users just not well prepared. To our good fortune, there were lots of people who were entirely new to being on the trail at all. The good news is that most of you were patient, showed leadership in being cautious and extending courtesy, and maintained a helpful awareness of all our new trail users. All of this resulted in a lot of people having an enjoyable trail experience, and aided in keeping incidents to a minimum. You all did great in a very unusual and busy time.

The big thing that really happened started with all of you trail volunteers wanting to escape the shut-in, and go do something useful. In the true spirit of Montour, the Friends groups engaged in all sorts of trailside improvements. Throughout the whole trail corridor, small groups or individuals devoted their energies to upgrading fencing, cleaning up encroaching brush and trees, opening up ditches, and grooming trailside plantings. All over, it was a very active summer for improving the appearance and condition of the trail. Even though the hot, dry weather slowed growth, there was still plenty of grass cutting, plus the continual drumbeat of downed trees. Taking care of all this, and a lot more, really kept the trail looking attractive for all those people who were out there enjoying it.

While an attractive setting is a fine thing, for nearly all of our trail users the most important thing is the actual trail surface itself. They want their shoes to land firm and even, and their tires to roll smooth and straight. Some areas of our trail surface were in less than optimal condition, yet were being subjected to this year's high traffic. So, Montour's trail resurfacing crew, led by Bill Capp, swung into action. Armed with our new Ford dump truck, they cleaned up the existing trail and resurfaced it with a thick layer of fresh new crushed limestone in two high traffic areas in Cecil and Peters, creating nearly two miles of newly surfaced trail. They have also started working in the Fort Cherry area north of the McDonald Viaduct, heading towards Route 22, which had not seen major maintenance since its 2010 rebuild. Over the last decade, much of the trail in that stretch had developed a grassy center hump, reducing it to two narrow tracks. The crew undertook to remove the center hump and make the trail reasonably smooth and rideable over its full width. Some resurfacing of particularly needy sections is planned for the near future.

Certainly, the greatest success of the summer was the completion of a half mile of new mainline Montour Trail in South Park Township. Project manager Tom Prezel saw the project through its final stages of engineering, put it out to bid, and with the assistance of Dave Jackal and many others oversaw its construction. The signature feature is a new trail bridge structure over Piney Fork Creek, supported by century-old Pennsylvania Railroad stone abutments. Also surfaced by the volunteer crew, the new section parallels Piney Fork Road, and is mostly shady and cool in the warm months. The other new trail project is the 34 mile planned to go from Mile 0 to Coraopolis, started last year. It was delayed this summer, but trail construction is expected to re-start this Fall, so watch for upcoming news from Project Manager Dennis Pfeiffer. Continues on page 3.

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 55 mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

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 22.0 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 Frida 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.

The Westland Friends: (MP 21.0 to 21.9, and Westland

Branch) Standard meeting schedule is third Thursday of the month at 1:30 PM at MTC Office in Bridgeville. During Pandemic, meetings have been moved outside to Galatit trailhead pavilion. For more information contact Dave Hajnik at 412-498-3854 (text enabled) or <u>dave@theneonweb.com</u>

Note: Many of these meetings are being held virtually these days due to the pandemic. Please contact the appropriate individual to verify physical or on-line meeting specifics!

The Prez Sez continues from page 2

Back in South Park, a great deal of behind the scenes work was accomplished, and continues to be, in preparation to build two remaining missing links, one through the South Park mini-storage facility and the other across the eastern end of the Summit Station development. Dave Oyler, Project Manager for both, expects to be able to oversee the process to finish the design, go to bid, and construct these two sections by the end of next year. Also in South Park, we obtained permits for two threatening water scour areas along Piney Fork Creek; the remediation work was started and will soon resume to protect our creek side trail and bridges.

Largely invisible to our trail users but critical to its operation, Montour's various committees remained extremely active all throughout the summer, with much good work done. A tip of the hat to all the committee chairs, who persevered and accomplished tricky objectives under the difficult conditions of being unable to convene in-person meetings and being forced to make do with the far less effective teleconference and video tools available.

So, the Montour Trail has taken on an entirely new and, if you will, life sustaining role in the lives of its volunteer workers, its users, its communities, and the region at large. It took us away from the grim prospect of a summer that wasn't, and gave us all a Summer that Was. Let's keep it going into an active Fall, and into next year.

Thank you all greatly for caring so much. Be well and keep up your energies. Montour will continue to need you!

Ned Williams



MTC Online Annual Meeting

Via Zoom

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2020

7:00 PM Agenda

Results of Board of Directors election Deb Thompson, MTC Board Secretary

State of the Montour Trail Council 2020 Ned Williams, MTC Board President

- MTC's Accomplishments in 2020
- MTC Financial Status
- Illustrated Review of 2020 Construction and Maintenance Projects

Please plan to join us!

Zoom login credentials for the annual meeting will be sent by email to all MTC members for whom we have email addresses and will be available on MontourTrail.org.

Nominees to the MTC Board of Directors for the 2021 – 2023 Term

MTC by-laws state: Members may be elected for two consecutive three-year terms and may serve again after at least one year off the board

Vote for no more than six:

Fran Hensler (1st term) _____ Dave Jackel (1st term) _____

Julian Wolfe (1st term)

Mark Modispacher (2nd term)

David Oyler (2nd term)

David Oyler (2 term)

Tom Prezel (2nd term) _____ Other Mail ballot to:

Montour Trail Council Attn: Board Secretary 304 Hickman Street, Suite 3 Bridgeville, PA 15017

Maill by October 24, 2020

Teen's Eagle Project Adds Fitness Station at Galati by Phillip G. Torrez

Danny Phillips (below) loves to exercise, stay in shape and be in the outdoors. So it was a natural for him to propose building a trailside



Phillips — a 17-year old senior at Canon-McMillan High School and member of Boy Scout Troop 1313 in McMurray — worked with family members and a group of friends to build the fitness station at the Galati trailhead over six hours on August 8. A week later, he returned to finish up, adding more mulch around the site and a step to the pull-up bar.

fitness station when he tackled his Eagle Scout community service project.

Phillips says he and his buddies and his parents often cycle, walk and run on the Montour Trail and typically access the trail at Galati. He thought it would be a good place for the fitness station, since it has a scenic view of a nearby bridge as well as a portajohn, water fountain and pavilion for Trail visitors.

To fulfill the requirements to attain the rank of Eagle Scout, the pinnacle of scouting, the scout must take leadership of a service project benefiting the community.

That means the scout is responsible for conceptualizing the project, including a funding plan, then proceeding through a rigorous approval process within the scouting hierarchy. It also involves soliciting donations and volunteers to complete the proposal. "You're not allowed to spend money on the project," he says.

Phillips approached about 15 area businesses to donate the materials and supplies he needed to build the fitness station, which ended up totaling more than \$700. He said it took a lot of work to contact potential donors and follow-up with them. All but two came through with donations.

The fitness station was constructed using 4x6 treated lumber, 1¼-inch galvanized steel bars, 1,150 pounds of concrete, and 45 cubic feet of certified playground mulch, with more than 200 man-hours expended in planning, coordination and construction, says Phillips.

He thanks these businesses for their generous contributions to the project: Home Depot stores in Bridgeville, Washington, North Fayette, West Mifflin and Bethel Park; A&S Landscaping in Canonsburg; Chick-fil-A restaurant in South Hills; Fiori's Pizzaria in McMurray; Walmart and Sam's Club, both in Washington; and Giant Eagle in McMurray.

Phillips and his volunteer crew began work at 9 a.m. and had the work knocked out by 3 p.m. "It went fantastic," he says. "Everyone worked hard. A lot of my friends helped me out."

Phillips coordinated the project with Dave Hajnik, president of the Trail's Westland Friends, which maintains the Galati trailhead. Hajnik says the location is good for the fitness station since it's an open field with good views of its surroundings. He adds, "People riding or walking by, if they feel like exercising their arms a little bit, now they can do it."

Hajnik gives high praise to the project, noting that the wood bars were sanded so there are no splinters, the posts for the bars were remarkably dug 36-inches deep, and the concrete was mixed and set properly for the posts. "I think it's exceptionally well done," he says.

The 18th Annual Tour the Montour

The planning committee wasn't sure what to expect when we Supporting Sponsors: Aero Tech Designs took the Tour the Montour virtual, due to the Covid pandemic. But there Allegheny Health Network Franklin Heights Medical Association has been wholehearted corporate support and an amazing turnout for the ride! Highmark BC/BS MCC International We thank everyone who participated as well as this year's sponsors: Seven Springs Sweetwater Bikes **UBS Financial Services** Naming Sponsor: FedEx Ground Advanced Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation **Presenting Sponsors:** T shirt pickup You must have a picture ID Pittsburgh International Airport Oct. 17 at trailhead at Tandem Connection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Eaton **Corporate Sponsors:** Bob & Patsy Brown Oct 18 at trailhead at Cliff Mine between 12 noon and 4 p.m. Range Resources IntegraCare Oct 21 thru Oct 26 REI Settlers Ridge during store hours **Skeptic Distillery** Davan Raffle winners will be notified by email or phone

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY

The Company Store By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society



One of the most important businesses in a typical coal patch community was the company store. Company stores were usually owned by the coal company that operated the local coal mine, although for legal reasons direct ownership was often held by a subsidiary company. In the Montour area, Federal Supply and Champion Stores ran many of the company stores.

The store supplied the miners with all the items needed for daily living. Groceries, meats, dry goods, clothes, furniture and appliances were all available at the store. They sold everything, such as mine tools, picks, shovels, large crowbars, augers, brass checks for blasting powder, hard hats, guns, etc. At some communities the store also included the local post office.

Most company stores did not operate on a cash system like stores in towns and cities. Some used a scrip system, where paper or tokens were obtained from the coal company on payday. The miners were paid in the scrip, which could only be used at the company store or other approved businesses, thus keeping the miners from spending their earnings elsewhere.

The rear of the Hendersonville Company Store shows the dormer where a freight elevator is housed. A rope leading outside the building would be pulled by horses or mules to raise or lower the elevator. Bryan Seip photo taken 2011.

Other places used a credit system, where the price of goods purchased would be accumulated by the company store and taken out of the miners' paychecks before they were issued. Miners did not make any money in those days. Everything was sold on

credit. A lot of paydays the miners got nothing. More was spent than they made. In fact, most miners in those days were in the minus column after working for the coal company for a while. The company could manage the miners' finances by working them only one, two, or three days a week, keeping them broke. It didn't take long to go in the hole.

Shopping at the stores was different than it is today. Customers did not roam up and down open aisles picking out items. A clerk would take an order, get the items off the shelves and bring it to a counter for the customer. The customer did not handle items until they were ready to leave the store. Since there were only one or two choices or brands for grocery items it was a much simpler system than today.

Many of the company store buildings in our area have succumbed to fire or demolition after the mines were closed. However, several remain and have been repurposed for other businesses. The Tandem Connection bike shop adjacent to the trail in Hendersonville was originally a company store for the Henderson Mine community. This wooden building was built around 1916, after the mine was opened. The three story structure housed groceries and meats on the first floor, clothes, dry goods and furniture on the second and appliances in the third floor attic space. A freight elevator was used to move goods to and from the upper floors. It was powered by a rope which led outside the



A clerk attends to a customer in the grocery section of the Muse company store.

building where horses or mules pulled or lowered the elevator. A railroad spur next to the building allowed goods to be delivered to the store.

The company store in Muse at National Mine #3 was a brick building in the center of town, now being used by a printing company. It also included a separate service station building where gas, oil, tires and maintenance could be purchased for automobile owners.

The company store in Library at Montour Mine #10 was built in 1940 by the Federal Supply Co. After closing in the mid-1950's, it was later reopened for use by several businesses under the Champion Plaza banner. This was also a distribution facility supplying other stores in the Pittsburgh Coal Company's store system.

Buildings used as company stores also remain in Lawrence (Hills Station), Westland and Imperial. These are mostly brick or concrete block buildings, as many of the wooden structures built over a century ago have succumbed to fires or disuse and demolition.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Historical Society through Facebook by searching for the Montour Railroad Historical Society. There are currently 425 members from across the country. 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.montourr.com

Volume 31 Issue 5

MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

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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. Not all new members have been entered as of print deadline and will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter.

New Members

Anna Abdulmanova James Altman The Ambroso Family The AMW **Bookkeepers** Charles Ban Mike & Cindy Baran John Barrett Mike & Judy Barry Jonathan Bechor Carol Bonicky John Brehm Barrett Bunnell Scott Burge Brian Byrge Mark Cappello Mark & Carol Capuano Mark Carlisle Wayne Cass Leandro & Dias Cesar Lawrence Chaban Raja S. Chava W. Scott Chrystal Merrick Cohn **Pauline Connelly** Collin Conway Edward Cooper Mark Cotter Karen Courson Elizabeth Cronin Richard Cwiklinski Cora & Mimi Darragh James Davis David & Suzanne Davis Robert DePhillips Linda Dimitroff

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John Lydon Matthew Mahon Tom & Cindy Malatesta Paul Marocchi Jean McCarthy Linda McClelland Joseph F. McDonough Donna McHugh BC McKinney Eric McMurry Bob & Chrissie Miller Pat Minkus Jerome & Sheryl Misiewicz Michael Montini R.H. Moore Ann Moss The Nielsen Family **Richard Novak** James Oberleitner Grant Olson **Thomas Orefice** Jonathan M. Pachter Paul Palevsky Richard & Sharon Papke Maureen Parker Michael Passalacqua Diane Pedersen Anthon Perry Mark Pobicki Deborah Polvani Jennifer Pribanic Don Raab John Raczkiewicz Eric Raphael Lou Reichenbach Russell & Linda Rice Steven Ringeisen

Charles Robb Carol Rohrbaugh **Cindy Ross** Thomas Roundtree Laurie Rushin James Rushworth Margaret Sanfilippo **Richard Satler** Herman & Susie Scharf Jef Seik Chandra Sekaran Jean Seneway **Ryan Shanely Ryan Silvis Cliff Sinopoli** Bonnie Slavinsky **Douglas Smith** Craig & Sharon Snyder Bruce Sorkin Randi Starr Shawn Steele Dianne Stuckman Sy Sweet John Uhrin Gerald Velmer Michael Vukmanic James Walter Beth Watson **Robert Wellington** Mike & Beth Wheat David & Diane White John Whiteford James Will Rob Willis Greg Winkle James Wolf PaulYater Lynn & Eric Young

Jessica Young Kathryn Yowell Harry & Kathleen Zabetakis Kristine Zottola

Benefactors

Cafe Raymond Cathy & Jeffrey Finch George M. Golvash Dave & Veronica Mattson Jeanne & Parker May Richard Novak Cliff Sinopoli John & Mary Jo Wasco Mike & Beth Wheat Kristine Zottola

Leaders

Chad John Carolyn & Randy Krakoff R.H. Moore Randi Starr Jim & Nancy Starr Rob Willis J. A. Wunderlich, III

Our apologies to **Craig and Lynda McKay** who were left out of the sustaining member list in the An-



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For more map details, see www.montourtrail.org