Trail Picnic on August 13

Come join us on Sunday, August 13, at the Forest Grove Sportsman's Club near Trail Milepost 2 in Robinson Township for a little R & R. (We all need it!) Bring the whole family for an afternoon of food, children's games, fishing, horseshoes and more. A "slow" bicycle race is in the works at 3:00 and from noon to one, a novice and above mountain bike ride will take place along the level terrain on the other side of the creek from the Trail. (But you'll have to go thru the Montour Creek to get there! Also plan on some mud, but you can use the same stream to clean off your bike when it is all done.)

The picnic starts at 11:00 a.m. and will last until whenever. Hot dogs, hamburgers, and drinks (all donated) will be provided. The picnic organizers are asking people to bring salads and desserts. In the event of bad weather, we can still use the kitchen and hall inside the club.

Please call 257-2328 and follow the instructions to voice mailbox #8, by Aug. 8, to tell us your name and how many adults and children you will be bringing.

To get to the club, take I-79 North to the Coraopolis exit. Turn left onto Rt. 31 and go under 179. Go past the entrance to 179 South and turn left up the hill on Forest Grove Rd. Stay on that curvy road until you come to a STOP sign. Turn right onto Ewings Mill Rd. At the bottom of the steep hill, turn left at the sign for the Forest Grove Sportsman's Club. You are there.

From Rt. 60, Steubenville Pike, turn onto Beaver Grade Rd. at the Duke of Buckles Car wash. Go to the first STOP sign and turn right onto Silver Lane. Follow Silver Lane all the way to the end at the STOP sign by the Tennis station. Turn Left. Don't make any more turns till you get to the bottom of the steep hill.

Trail Council votes to provide porta-potties

At the May Board of Directors meeting of the Montour Trail Council, it was unanimously voted in the affirmative to provide 5 porta-potties at various locations on the Trail. Concern was raised over costs and vandalism, but everyone agreed that this was one of the most requested services asked for by Trail users.

At a cost of $75.00 apiece per month, this is no insignificant expenditure. Mr. John Inc. agreed to provide one of the "Johns" for free but the others still add up to $1,500.00 for the five months they will be in place. (An extra fee of $20.00 per pottie, per month for insurance is being considered.)

Unfortunately, there are no foundation grants for porta-potties. These funds must come from our general operating budget that relies primarily on the dues of the members of the Montour Trail Council. Other items that come from these unrestricted (non-trail building) funds include legal fees, postage, telephone bills, certain signs, tractor payments and maintenance costs, and truck, trailer and other equipment maintenance costs (gas, inspection, registration, repairs, etc.).

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your memberships and if you are not a member, please consider joining us. Remember, The Montour Trail is not a county, borough, or township park. It was conceived, built and maintained by the volunteer membership of the Montour Trail Council, a non-profit group, (with some help from certain public agencies because of the benefits we provide to the community) and all donations are tax-deductible.
**Editor's Observations**

Wow, what a busy time on the Trail. It seems to have taken on a life of its own. MTC volunteers are fixing erosion problems, painting over graffiti, planting trees, mending fences (literally and figuratively), cutting grass, repairing road bridges, providing information booths, building and installing benches, and raising funds. And that’s just on the 19 miles of completed Trail. Still others are working on foundation grants, drawing up design plans for local government planners, and clearing away old ties and debris in preparation to build more Trail on the 30+ miles of uncompleted right of way.

Other groups only wish for the success that we have had. In case you didn’t know, there is a loose knit group of folks in Burgettstown trying to get Conrail to railbank a recently abandoned section of railroad that runs from Weirton to Walkers Mill, near Carnegie. This right of way runs right underneath the McDonald Trestle of the Montour Trail and the MTC owns a connector line that runs right to it. In Carnegie the new busway is supposed to have a bikeway running next to it. Just think of the opportunity of having a Pittsburgh to Weirton trail with the 50 mile Montour Trail crossing it at around the 15 mile mark! Of course if Bud Schuster gets his way and strips the railbanking law of it’s teeth you can probably say good-bye to that dream as well as the trails that will connect us with Washington D.C. Keep your fingers crossed.

On another subject, I mentioned in the last issue about the person I caught pulling up by the roots the daffodils that were planted by some unknown benefactor. Well we now know who these Trail benefactors are. In the fall of ’93 and ’94, Joe Borza and his wife “Charlie” Borza, accompanied by friends and some of the staff of the Post-Gazette West, planted hundreds of daffodil bulbs between Mileposts 2 and 4. What a nice surprise it was to see them blooming so abundantly this past spring. Thank you.

If anyone else goes down to the Trail to plant some flowers or trees, remember to try to keep them about 5 feet from the edge of the trail so that we don’t mow them down while cutting grass and weeds.

P.S. If you would like more information on the Weirton to Carnegie trail group call Larry Droppelman in Weirton at 304-723-2577. The group meets in Burgettstown.

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**Letters**

THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER welcomes all questions and comments. Please send all correspondence to the address on the left.

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The Montour Trail Council is an **all volunteer** organization founded in 1989 to convert the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way and the abandoned Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad into a fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.
+ MTC Board Meeting, every third Monday of the month - Second floor of 441 Smithfield St. across from Kaufmann’s, 6:00pm. All MTC members are welcome to attend. Call Jack at 221-7708 for more information or to get on the agenda.

+ Cecil Friends of the Trail meeting, every first Tuesday of the month - in the Boy Scout room at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, 7:30. Call 221-6406

+ Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail meeting, every second Thursday of the month at 7:00. At the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Clever Rd.s in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 859-3020 for more information.

+ Findlay/ North Fayette Friends of the Trail meeting, every third Wednesday of the month, at 7:00. Held at the West Allegheny Community Library. Anyone from the communities around Findlay and North Fayette are encouraged to attend. Call Fred at 695-0134 for more information.

+ Work & Clean-up party, Cecil segment, every third Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Kernick Tract parking area. Call 221-6406 for more information.

+ Work & Clean-up party, Moon/Robinson segment, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00am. Meet at North Star Petroleum (formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 262-3748 for more information.

+ Work & Clean-up party, Findlay/North Fayette segment, every forth Saturday of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 695-2354 for more information.

+ Trail construction preparation - South Park Twp. Every Monday evening at 6:00 until segment is completed. Meet at the site of the future CoGo's at the intersection of Brownsdale Rd. and Piney Forks Rd. Call 831-8304 for more information.

+ MTC Picnic! - Sunday, August 13. (See page 1) At the Forest Grove Sportsman's Club from 11:00 am until ?. Call 257-2328, voice mailbox #8, to make your reservations.

+ Tour de Mercy Day on the whole Montour Trail. Saturday, July 8. Sponsored by Mercy Hospital. Details upcoming in the local papers, on T.V. or call 232-7506 for more information.

+ Beer volunteers needed at Labor Day Rib Cook-off - September 1, 2, 3, & 4. Can you spare 4 hours to help us raise at least $4,000.00? When's the last time you made $1,000 an hour pouring suds? Call 531-8628 to help.

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GIMME SHELTER!

Shelter is needed, at least temporarily, for one GMC stake truck, one John Deere tractor with post auger and weed cutter attachments, and one equipment trailer. This Montour Trail Council property is presently stored outdoors for lack of a suitable building. The Council is searching for a garage, barn or warehouse where this equipment can be properly housed and better maintained and repaired. Offers or tips on such a place in southern Allegheny or northern Washington Counties will receive serious consideration. Contact Dick Quasey at 859-6864.

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Thank you!

The Montour Trail Council would like to thank the following sponsors of the recent Tour De Mercy Focus Day festival on the Trail:

- Michael And Lynn McCarthy and Children
- Integra Bank
- PNC Bank
- The Tonidale Restaurant
Dr. Morris Bierman memorial donations top $3,000

by Tim Killmeyer

Dr. Morris Bierman was an avid bicyclist who liked the concept of rail-trails and the Montour Trail in particular. His dream was to get on at the Coraopolis Trailhead when the whole 55 miles was done and ride with his wife Patty all the way to Washington D.C. Dr. Bierman died on April 30, and his wife, knowing of his love for the Trail, requested that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Montour Trail in his name. To date, 60 of his friends and family have done just that, donating over $3,300.

Dr. Bierman, of Swissvale, was the Director of Cardiovascular I.C.U. at Presbyterian University Hospital. He was also a Professor of Anesthesiology C.C.M., the Medical Director of the Cardiothoracic Surgical I.C.U. and a member of the Western Pennsylvania Wheelmen.

The Montour Trail Council would like to thank his wife Patty, and all his family and friends for remembering the Trail during their time of grief. We hope that when they use the Trail, it reminds them of the happy times Dr. Bierman spent using it.

Bridge surgery a success

by Dennis Sims

The Cecil Friends of the Montour Trail spent their May work day rehabilitating sections of the Johnston Road "Hy-bridge" over the Westland Branch in Mount Pleasant Township. Three sections of the wood deck had deteriorated to the point that they needed replacement. The bridge is the responsibility of the Montour Trail Council since it spans the trail, so it was up to the Trail Council to fix it. The Cecil Friends took on the challenge!

Two days prior to Operation Bridge Deck, several members of the group spent a couple of hours in the rain planning the operation. There was concern by the surgeons regarding the conditions of the stringers underneath the deck. One section of the deck was so badly weathered, that the group could pry back some of the 2x6's to look at the stringers. The stringers were found to be a piece of wood bolted to a steel beam. This put to rest many fears. The surgery could be performed.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny and would be a good day for the operation. Permission was granted to the Friends to anesthetize the bridge to traffic when it became necessary. The first incision was made on the smaller section on the west end of the bridge to remove the damaged wood. Once the wood was removed and the edges of the incision squared, 3/8's woldmanized plywood was nailed to the stringers to take up the space that would be left after the new 2x6's were sutured into place. The boards were placed on edge in the vacancy left behind. The original boards were rough-hewed and were six inches wide, our lumber is 5 5/8 inches wide. The final scars would be healed over with tar and chips. This procedure continued with the two other diseased areas on the bridge.

The surgery was finished about 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon and the following people need to be thanked for giving up much of the day to volunteer: Morris Delicato who was the head surgeon, other members of the surgical team were John Thomas, Ben Shinsky, Hoyt Hall, Don Berty, Bill Palmer, Doug Douglas, Stan Sattlinger, Dave Wright, and Dennis Sims.
Eagle candidate creates rest stops

Brian Fullgraf and Cecil Boy Scout Troop 1369 spent much of their Memorial Day Weekend installing benches along the Cecil Segment of the Trail for Brian’s Eagle Scout project. The ten benches are placed at half mile intervals between Hendersonville and the Park. While they were at it, they also replaced mileposts 25 and 26.

Brian’s goal was to have the benches in place for Trail Day, Saturday June 3, 1995. He succeeded and we thank him and the scout troop.
**Pennies add up for the Moon/Robinson Friends**

The first annual “Pennies for your Trail” day held on May 20, was called a huge success by all who participated. Sponsored by the Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail group, it netted over $2,000 to be used for improvement and maintenance of the Moon/Robinson section of the Trail. Two “weigh stations” were put into place, one at Milepost 0 at the beginning of the Trail and the other at the Park Manor Blvd. crossing below Robinson Town Centre. Electronic scales were provided by John Palco of the Acme Scale Co. on Butler St. in Pittsburgh. Volunteers worked from 9:00am to 3:00pm collecting and weighing the coins brought to them by Trail users from all over the county. Prizes were awarded to those who brought in the most coins by weight.

First prize of a Weekend for two was won by Linda and Leanna Zaccoone of Robinson Township. They brought in a wagon loaded with containers of pennies that weighed 60.35 pounds and was worth approximately $97.44. Second place was won by Gil Jones of Pittsburgh who brought down a Snoopy bank in which he had been collecting pennies since the birth of his son Eric 23 years ago. His pennies weighed just over 50 pounds and was worth approximately $82.84. The third prize was won by Craig Conley, also of Pittsburgh. He brought a large, plastic, beer bottle bank that he had been saving pennies in for about 15 years. Craig’s pennies weighed 48.16 pounds and was valued at approximately $77.72, beating out forth place contender, ace-photographer Bill Metzger, by less than 2 pounds.

Most of the donations were between 5 and 20 pounds and all of them together weighed almost 900 pounds! The rest of the money that put the group over the $2,000 mark was collected in buckets from cars waiting at the traffic lights on Montour Run Rd. and Park Manor Blvd. It consisted mostly of paper money and silver coins.

The Moon/Robinson Friends group would like to thank all who participated in this fundraiser, the Acme Scale Co., the Airport Marriot, PNC Bank in Moon Township for counting all the coins, and especially all those who donated. It all adds up to a better Trail.

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**The Eagle way**

by Dick Quasey

Colin McIlhugh, a 17 year old Life Scout, living in Whitehall, is determined to be an Eagle Scout. He is already proficient in a required number of personal skills, has proven to be of good character, has demonstrated civic responsibility and, most recently, performed significant community service.

Colin planned, organized and directed the clearing and removal of trash, debris, trees and undergrowth under the Montour Railroad trestle crossing SR 88 and Piney Fork Creek in Library. This task was accomplished on Saturday and Sunday, June 24th and 25th and involved approximately 120 man-hours of labor by 12 fellow scouts and adult volunteers (Mom helped too!).

The purpose of this major effort is to preserve the bridge so it can be converted in the foreseeable future to full Trail use.

Scoutmaster Mike Kall, Troop 238, St. Bernard’s Church, Mt. Lebanon, reports that Colin is near completing the requirements for Eagle Scout and hopes to receive his Eagle Badge this fall. Watch this Eagle fly!

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**A few addresses to send the letter on the next page.**

The Honorable Bud Shuster
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Santorum
120 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
1218 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3802

The Honorable Tom Ridge
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Sample letter to preserve current railbanking laws

Dear __________,

I am writing to you to express my concern that a small group of special interests is now trying to take advantage of the frantic pace of Congress by attempting to gut the rail banking provision contained in Section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act. If successful, their actions will close the door to preserving the 10,000 miles of rail corridor expected to be abandoned between now and the year 2000; will jeopardize the 3,200 miles of rail-trail currently rail banked; and will disrupt, if not terminate, current negotiations between railroads and local public agencies to save an additional 1,200 miles.

At the present time there are more active rail-trail projects in western Pennsylvania than in any other location in the United States. In a recent edition of Travel and Leisure magazine, the Yough River Trail from Connellsville to Ohiopyle was rated as one of the top ten trails in the world. The rail-trail along the Youghiogheny River, for instance, is serving as the focal point for regional recreation and tourist development projects in association with the Department of Interior and various economic development agencies in Allegheny, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties. This process is revitalizing the small communities along the trail.

The legislation that would strip the rail banking provisions from the National Trail Systems Act is part of the ICC's sunset bill which is before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee which is chaired by Congressman Bud Shuster. He will have the final say over the destiny of rail banking and the rail-trail movement.

There are literally thousands of volunteers across western Pennsylvania who have worked years to raise money, clear brush, rebuild bridges, clear out clogged drainage ditches and construct trails to provide their communities and their families with a safe place to walk, ride their bicycles and use their wheelchairs for a healthful recreational experience. Most of these groups have been sensitive to the concerns of adjacent landowners and have worked with them to screen their properties from the trails where necessary and instruct trail users to respect the privacy rights of those adjacent property owners.

These trail projects have brought communities together. They provide a positive public vision for taking abandoned industrial corridors and converting them into linear recreational parks which benefit all members of the community.

I urge you to express your strong support for rail banking to Representative Shuster and to do everything you can to save the rail-trails in western Pennsylvania by preserving Section 8(d) of the National Trail System Act.

Very truly yours,

Order form for the Incredible Inch Campaign

Disclaimer: You won’t actually own a piece of the Montour Trail, but we appreciate your donation.

The whole Montour Trail is now “for sale”. All 3,484,800 inches of it. Buy it by the inch, foot, yard, rod, furlong, mile or league. It is all the same reasonable price; a buck an inch. That’s right, a buck an inch! And your inches run the whole ten foot width of the trail (that’s 120 inches wide).

You can be creative: add up the height of your entire family and buy that many inches of trail, or measure the length of your whole family’s feet. How long is your dog? Buy his length in inches of trail. Or, if your a little short, just buy the length of his tail. And they make great gifts for that active friend. If you sold every inch of trail, it would pay for the whole thing.

For your money, you will receive a genuine, simulated hand-lettered, faux-embossed, 8 1/2 x 11 inch official looking “deed” (suitable for framing), that will proudly proclaim your ownership of the trail (with the requisite fineprint). This beautiful document will show the total number of inches you “own” and the township in which they are located.

Please fill out this form and return it with your check to: MTC INCREDIBLE INCH CAMPAIGN 1060 STANFORD RD., PITTSBURGH PA. 15205

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Circle the community that you would like named on your “deed”:

MOON TOWNSHIP  ROBINSON TWP. (ALLEG)  CLAIRTON
ROBINSON TWP. (WASH)  SOUTH PARK TWP.  BETHHEL PARK
JEFFERSON BORO  BEATON TOWNSHIP

USE THE COUPON
Will you volunteer to help pour beer?

Back last Labor Day the Montour Trail Council helped out at the 2nd Annual Cook-Off. A funds raising affair held at the Monongahela County Rib Cook-Off by the Dr. Shultz's Enterprises, Inc. The event was a success with the families and friends of the Monongahela County Rib Cook-Off.

This year, we have again agreed to help in the Monongahela County Rib Cook-Off. We need a minimum of 32 people per day to pull this off. Our daily charge is $400.00 to the Monongahela County Rib Cook-Off.

We need a minimum of 32 people per day to pull this off. Our daily charge is $400.00 to the Montour Trail Council.

We need your help. We have a number of people who are willing and able to fulfill our commitment. This year, with plenty of time to prepare, we should be able to turn out an adequate force.

We need to raise $4,000.00 to the Montour Trail Council.