



Another MTC Groundbreaking

It was another momentous day in the history of the Montour Trail when the ground was broken, or should I say, a bridge tie was lifted, to mark the onset of construction for Phase 16. Participants in the event gathered at the east end of Valleybrook #3, that will be the trail-bridget that crosses Valleybrook Road just south of Chartiers Creek and Buckeye Lane in Peters Township. Thanks go out to Tom Robinson, owner of TAR Outside Storage for allowing us to use his property for automobile parking and easy access to the site of the ceremony.



Photo by Dennis Sims

From Left to Right, Mark and Kinga Blum, Mingo Creek Const.; Patricia Moore, Peters Twp.; Scott Fergus, Washington County. Matt Campion aide to Sen. John Pippy.; Rep. Tim Murphy, Mark Imgrund, Ed Taylor, and Ned Williams of the Montour Trail.

Words were said by several area community leaders, including Congressman Tim Murphy, Matt Campion representing state Senator John Pippy of the 37th district which includes Peters Twp., Peters Twp. Councilwoman Patricia Moore and others. The owners of Mingo Creek Construction, Kinga and Mark Blum, the winning bidder for the project were introduced. Following the speeches, everyone gathered at the bridge for the “tie lifting”. The dignitaries took turns cranking the come-along lifting the tie from its place. Construction was set to begin November 15 with completion scheduled for July 15.

Following the ceremony, many of us gathered at Cecil Park for the third annual Montober Fest which was shared with members of the Cecil Township Parks and Recreation Board and others. Participants shared covered dishes. Hot dogs, kolbassi and soups were cooked up by the Montour Trail Council’s resident chef, Frank Ludwin.

5th Annual Tour The Montour – A Sunny Success ! by Sam Hvitfelt, Ride Director

For those of you who could join us, the Fifth Annual Tour The Montour on Saturday, September 22nd, 2007 was a spectacular day ! Bright and sunny, with perfect riding temperatures ... it was a ride not to be missed !

In fact, many local riders thought so too ! The 5th Annual Tour hosted our largest number of riders yet – 244 participants ! Thanks to our wonderful group of volunteers and generous sponsors, riders were well-supported - from parking their car in the wee hours of the morning to enjoying a tasty lunch after the ride. Trek of Pittsburgh was on hand to make sure everyone’s bikes were ready to roll, while Anthony’s Original Wholesale Produce, Shaffer’s Pizza-Bakery, Chick-fil-A, Mediterra Bakery, Brothers Grimm and Jabby Joe’s kept everyone’s energy levels up with their yummy food. We were happy to welcome a new sponsor (and a new rest stop) to the ride this year. The Enlow Station, the newly opened ice cream shop located at Mile 8 on the Trail, provided treats for our participants as well.

Tim Killmeyer’s Collector’s Edition 5th Annual Tour T-shirts were another hit this year. Owing to the high number of participants, those who registered on the day had to wait for a second printing of the T-shirt, but found it worth the wait. Make a note for next year – be sure to pre-register so you can wear your event shirt proudly directly after your ride ! There are a few extra shirts; if you would like to purchase one, please contact the Trail office.

We are very proud to report that this year’s event raised \$9,000 – our highest contribution to the Montour Trail to-date. We could not have achieved that milestone (*continues on page 4*)

For your consideration

Every mile is two in winter.

George Herbert

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The Prez Sez

State of the Trail – 2007

Our bylaws require the president to provide a state of the trail message at the annual meeting, so for those of you who attended the recent MTC annual dinner, this column will be a partial repeat. Mercifully, I won't reprise my lamely humorous introduction about Pennsylvania, but simply report that the state of our trail is very good.

In terms of trail building, we formally opened the Montour-Panhandle Connector in June, with the Function at the Junction. We continued the all volunteer effort of building the West Peters section with over 1000 hours of labor, nearly completing the sub-base work before the West Peters bridge contract is completed, a project just starting. This \$1M contract for the three bridges and one tunnel in West Peters has gone through final approvals; we held our pre-job meeting on November 7 and issued a notice to proceed to our contractor, Mingo Creek Construction, for Nov. 15, with completion due by July 15, 2008.

Progress has been made (albeit somewhat painstakingly) on preconstruction work in South Park Township, on both the bridge over Piney Fork Creek and the Library Trestle. Our temporary crossing project at Route 50 and Route 980 in Venice is over 50% complete. This project consists of stairs to grade from the remaining span, a painted & signed crosswalk, and a ramp up the southeast side. Lastly, The J.R. Taylor Memorial Bridge over Clifton Road on the Bethel Branch is getting close to having all its engineering and preconstruction work completed.

Five grants were received or awarded in 2007. These include a DCNR grant for West Peters, grants from both the WCTPA and DCNR for the Montour Panhandle Connector, a DCED grant for improving the safety of the crossing at Cliff Mine Rd, and ARAD funding for South Park trail engineering and construction. We also received a Rivers of Steel grant for historical research on the Montour Railroad, ultimately to be used for writing a book and for future historical markers.

In addition, we await word on three pending grants. There are two outstanding DCNR grant requests, one for resurfacing between MP14 and MP17 plus drainage improvements in specific trouble spots between MP9 and MP17 and a second for final design of the Georgetown and Morganza Road bridges. Finally, we've submitted a grant request to Pittsburgh 250 for the Airport Connector that we should hear about before the end of the year.

Financially, the MTC's health is good. We conducted three successful trail fund-raising events in 2007: the Burgh's Pizza & Wings 10K Race in April; and in September the IKEA Half Marathon, and our Tour the Montour Ride. Coupled with some modest membership growth (the latest numbers showed 1040 members) and (continues on page 4)

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 Mark at 724-941-6351 for more information or to get on the agenda.

Cecil Friends:

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 meet at the MTC Offices. Work and cleanup parties are scheduled as needed. Call 412-496-4308 for more information.

Airport Area Friends

Friends of the Trail meeting, the Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at the Forest Grove Fire Department. Anyone from the communities of Moon, Robinson, North Fayette, and Findlay is encouraged to attend. Call 412-859-3020 for more information. Work and cleanup party, every second Saturday of the month - 9:00 a.m. Call 412-262-3748 for more information and location.

Bethel Park Friends:

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. For Clifton Road Bridge Committee meetings, contact Peter Kohnke at 412-854-1835 for more information.

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 of the Trail

Meeting first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Jefferson Hills Borough Building. 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

Fort Cherry Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, second Wednesday of the month at McDonald Borough Bldg., Council chambers at 7:00 p.m. Work and cleanup parties, scheduled as needed. For more information, contact Ray Johnston at 724-356-2621.

Peters Township Friends:

Friends of the Trail Meeting, first non-holiday Monday of the month at Peters Township Parks and 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@comcast.net.

Trail Dust

Producing the newsletter every other month is a fun task. I try to keep the production tasks on a schedule to ensure the newsletter gets completed on time and promptly mailed. The goal is to have each member receive it in their mailbox during the first week of the month. Articles are emailed to the editor by a set deadline usually between the 5th and 10th of the month allowing the middle of the month to finalize the layout, having it proofread for typos and errors and then sending it off to the printer around the 20th. A week later, the newsletters come back from the printer and then several of us get together to place the mailing labels which sorts the newsletters by zip code, and then haul them down to the central post office on the Northside for mailing.

I would like to thank the President, Mark Imgrund and his predecessor, Dennis Pfeiffer for providing their proofreading skills, the Cecil Friends of the Montour Trail for participating in the labeling parties and others. Also thanks to our printer Dave Cyphers at Reed and Witting, our printer for being so helpful and timely. Finally, a special thanks to John Hooton who has made the drive to the Post Office after our labeling session to assure that the newsletters arrive in your mailbox as soon as possible.

I also want to remind the readership that an electronic version of this newsletter is posted to the Montour Trail Website at about the same time you are receiving this in the mail. The newsletter is the same, except that the photography is displayed in color. Check it out sometime.

The next newsletter will arrive in your mailbox about the same time that Phil will see his shadow in Punxsutawney. So, if you would like to contribute to the next newsletter, please email your contribution by Saturday, January 6 (newsletter@montourtrail.org). Filling the eight-page newsletter during the winter months can be difficult, as trail activity wanes with the colder weather and shorter days.

Happy holidays,

Dennis

We Need a Few Good People

In 1998 the Montour Trail Council decided to start an organized group of civilian volunteer "Trail Monitor Patrols". The purpose of this group was to assist trail users in case of emergencies as well as non-emergencies. This group is still active today but our numbers are dwindling. Many of our patrols are no longer active in the program. Some of our patrols have moved away and some are no longer as physically active as they once were, so we need some new recruits.

What does a Trail Monitor Patrol do?

Trail Monitor Patrols are encouraged to carry cell phones and maintain current CPR certification. They carry gate keys which enables them to open gates in advance of the arrival of emergency vehicles. In the event of an emergency like cardiac arrest a few seconds could be the difference between life and death.

Law enforcement on the Montour Trail is the responsibility of the local police. In many areas the police patrol the trail on bikes but they can't be everywhere. So another important function of our patrols is surveillance of the trail. Our "Trail Monitor Patrols" are in fact, eyes and ears for law enforcement.

Our Trail Monitor Patrols also functions as ambassadors' for the Montour Trail Council, they are a friendly face greeting people and offering directions when needed.

As the Director of Trail Security I can tell you that since 1998 we have had very few incidents. We believe that one of the reasons we have had little trouble on the trail is because of the presence of our patrols. If being a patrol sounds interesting and you are at least 18 years old, a walker, biker or runner and you use the trail 2 to 3 times a week please contact Jesse Forquer via email at jjforquer@comcast.net or phone (412-257-3011) for further details.

The Prez Sez continued from page 2

being funded out of general operating funds, our cash flow and bank balances are sound. This has allowed several significant capital projects to have funds earmarked for completion, such as the Venice crossing, the slide repair just west of Muse-Bishop Bridge in Cecil Twp., and paving of the National Tunnel.

Organizationally, the board has made some positive changes this year. An exploratory Camping Committee was launched and has produced some preliminary findings. A Membership, Volunteer, and Donor Committee was recently formed to devote more attention to these important areas of our organization. To better meet the goals of the MTC, the board approved new policies for spending & budgeting of restricted and unrestricted funds, a security policy for trail patrols, a conflict of interest policy for the board, and a Montour Trail event policy.

Looking forward to 2008, we anticipate a couple of ribbon cuttings – for completion of the temporary Rt. 50/980 crossing in Venice (early summer), and the completion of West Peters Trail construction (by late 2008). We also hope for some ground-breaking as well – for the bridge over Clifton Road and possibly one or two locations in South Park Township. Pending successful securing of grants, we also hope to resurface McDonald Trestle to Quicksilver and make the needed drainage improvements there, and perhaps even to be ready to start some work on the Airport Connector.

In summary, we've had good 2007, thanks to all of our volunteers and supporters, and we hope for an even better 2008.

Happy holidays to all our trail supporters!

Mark

The Tour the Montour continued from page 1

without the financial support of our presenting sponsor, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and all our other wonderful sponsors – Park West Supply, Chairman of the Boards, Lanigan Massage Therapy, Gordon Terminal Services, Signal Graphics Printing, Wojanis Hydraulic Supply Company, Inc. and OrangeYouActive.com!!! You'll find all their names and businesses proudly emblazoned on our T-shirts.

On behalf of the Tour The Montour Planning Crew (Phyllis, Mark, Bill, Tim, Frank, Dennis and Linda), we'd like to thank all of the 5th Annual Tour's volunteers, sponsors and participants !! Thanks for riding with us !!

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 6th Annual Tour The Montour in September 2008, where we'll unveil a new era in T-shirt design and perhaps a few other interesting surprises ! We'll look forward to seeing you there !

Scenes of this year's Tour the Montour are to the right.



2007 Annual Trail Dinner at the Carnegie in Carnegie by John Hooton with photos by Frank Keppel.

Some 70 trail members, family and friends celebrated at dinner another year of Trail building on Sunday, November 4 at the handsome Reception Hall of the Andrew Carnegie Free Library in Carnegie. Our Trail and the library have a commonality in status- they are both in remarkable transformation from being worn out and used up in earlier lives to becoming renewed vibrant community assets.

Trail President Mark Imgrund got everyone's attention when in good humor he assured us that the "State of the Trail is Pennsylvania". Vice president Bill Orr then guided him back to the more usual report of dollars received and spent and miles developed. Mark gave us a glimpse, too, of the important two-mile connector currently under construction between Route 19 and Chartiers Creek-we'll have some 38 miles of almost continuous Trail when this new section is complete next year.

He then recognized and thanked several volunteers for their extraordinary efforts over the years- Jerry Agin for is 18 years as Membership Chairman- Judy Thompson as Treasurer for 11 years- Trail Friends members Karen and Jim Robbins from Peters, Hoyt Hall from Cecil, Frank Keppel on behalf of the Airport Friends, and Roger McElhaney from Fort Cherry were recognized and applauded. Unable to addend the annual dinner were Bill and Roxanne Capp of the Bethel Friends and John Becker of the South Hills Friends. He then thanked outgoing Board members John Hooton, Frank Ludwin and Dennis Pfeiffer for their many years of service.

The speaker for the night was author Jim Brink who tells a story about learning to love mountain biking through biking the Montour Trail daily one summer. His story "It's Alright to Ride Upright: An Ode to the Mountain Bike and the Railbed Trail" is included in the book "The Bicycle Book: Wit, Wisdom & Wanderings"

Trail "buddies" from Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub catered an excellent meal and thanks to Karen Robbins and her crew, the room decor was festive and fun. You should have been there if you weren't!



Treasurer, Judy Thompson is honored by President Imgrund for her years of service to the Trail Council.



Each Friends of the Trail group selected one of their members to be honored as the volunteer of the year. From left to right, President Imgrund, Frank Keppel representing the Airport Friends, Roger McElhaney, Fort Cherry, Hoyt Hall, Cecil; and Karen and Jim Robbins, Peters. Unable to addend the annual dinner were Bill and Roxanne Capp of the Bethel Friends and John Becker of the South Hills Friends.



Attendees sample the delicious delectables at the banquet. The banquet was catered by the Burgh's Pizza and Wing Pub in Bridgeville.



President Mark Imgrund thanks Jerry Agin for his years of service as the membership chairman. He retired earlier this year.

New Bench in South Park

The Montour Trail was presented with a new bench this summer by the South Park Women's Club. The bench, shown here, was donated to the trail through a project between May 2006 and May 2007. Women's Club president, Sandie Bond Mialki, shown in the photo. The bench was installed in September by the South Hills Friends of the Montour Trail, primarily through the efforts of project manager and South Park resident John Becker. The South Park Women's Club and the South Hills Friends invite trail users to stop by and enjoy a brief rest on the new bench located at mile 37.8 along Piney Fork Road. *Story and photo by Dave Oylar.*



MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY BY BOB CIMINEL

The Trail That Might Have Been

Imagine traveling along the Montour Trail between Champion and Geary's Curve (Trail Milepost 13.5) and coming across a sign for another 35-mile long trail called the "Northern Montour Trail." As you turned right off of the main trail, you would head south along Little Raccoon Creek until it joined with Raccoon Creek at Bavington. There, the trail would head due north to Murdocksville where it would enter Beaver County and pass through Raccoon Creek State Park. The trail would then follow Traverse Creek back toward the west before returning north again along Little Service Run. At the headwaters of Little Service Run the trail would join a tributary of Mill Creek, eventually joining the main stream, which you would follow through Hookstown to Georgetown on the banks of the Ohio. A bridge across the Ohio would bring you to Smith's Ferry where another trail would take you north along the fantastic gorge of the Little Beaver River. It could have happened.

Soon after the Montour Railroad completed the Mifflin Extension and created the right-of-way between Montour Junction and Mifflin Junction that the Montour Trail uses today, it submitted a proposal to build the Northern Montour Railroad between Geary Farm and Smith's Ferry. It did not take long for the Pennsylvania Railroad other railroads to challenge the Northern Montour's plans. In August of 1916, these competitors insisted that their original charters, issued by the State of Pennsylvania long before the Montour

was chartered, gave them exclusive rights to build rights-of-way in that area of Pennsylvania.

Although the Northern Montour was stillborn; however, not before extensive topographical maps were developed in 1918, the project was resurrected in 1934 by the Pittsburgh Coal Company (PCC) as it maneuvered around the Interstate Commerce Commission to construct a private railroad between Smith's Ferry and its wholly-owned subsidiary, the Youngstown and Southern Railroad at Negley, Ohio.

On November 17, 1934, the Montour Railroad proposed building a branch from North Star to a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp located on Traverse Creek in present day Raccoon Creek State Park. The CCC was working in the area around Traverse Creek and the state park is located on land once occupied by the CCC camp.

The route from North Star to Traverse Creek would have been considerably shorter than the original route via Geary's Farm and Raccoon Creek. Two possible routes would have followed either the North or South forks of Montour Run to reach Potato Garden Run and then head north to reach Raccoon Creek at Murdocksville. (The Clinton Block Spur, which left the Montour main track just east of the Route 30 overpass, followed the North Fork along this projected route, but then crossed over Route 30 at grade a short distance south of the Route 576 interchange to reach the Clinton Mine.) The seriousness of this proposal is evidenced by the PCC's support of landowners near the proposed site of Raccoon Creek State Park, which was originally a Recreational Demonstration Area operated by the National Park Service, in a Federal lawsuit to prevent the government from taking their land (and the potentially future right-of-way for the Montour Northern Railroad!).

Once again, the PRR and P&LE threw up every roadblock they could find to stop the PCC and the original charter for the Northern Montour was surrendered in 1936 after the private railroad and barge unloading facilities were completed at Smith's Ferry.

For trail users, the chance to have a trail that opened up the area between Imperial and the Ohio River, with the potential to cross the river link up with another network of trails in Ohio, would have been an invaluable asset for future generations. And for those of us who loved the Montour Railroad, the Northern Montour may have forestalled abandonment for a few more years.

Bob Ciminel is the founder of the Montour Railroad Yahoo group (http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/). There are currently 188 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.

Welcome New Members

The usual list of new members is unavailable for this issue due to technical difficulties. The list of new members will return with the January-February 2008 issue including the names that would have been printed in this issue. Thank You.

In its place, we recognize past and present members of the Montour Trail Patrol whose vigilance has helped to keep the Trail a safe and pleasant place to enjoy the great outdoors.

THE MONTOUR TRAIL PATROL PAST AND CURRENT

Trace Allen	Kathy Marks
Tony Banks	Peter Merther
William & Anne A. Barnes	Wallace Michalisk
Linda Beck	James Mkuzir
Paul Culan	William Morphey
Joan Dristas	Kris Moser
Brian Diyanni	Annemarie O'Toole
Dianne Forquer	Bill Orr
Jesse Forquer	Robert Pass
Linda Francis	Frank Porta
Hoyt Hall	Frank Puzurro
Bill Hubiak	Dennis Pfeiffer
Mryna Huey	Ned Williams
Mark Imgrund	Ed Williamson
Tim Killmeyer	Ed Ritter
Peter Kohnke	Dennis Sims
	Van Weaver

Readers Speak

Runners are good people Bernard Healey, Coraopolis, PA

I've been running since the age of 37. I am now 66. Over those years, I've come to believe that runners, as a group, are good people. A recent experience has validated that belief. I have run the Ikea 5k Race since its beginning. I've never been fast. I compete against myself and I've won my age group once and finished 3rd a couple of times. But mostly I'm back in the pack somewhere.

My goal this year was to finish in about 26 minutes. I was through the first mile in 7:35, but I was struggling. By the turn around at mile 2, I was at 16 minutes and slowing. I've run races, both 5 and 10k since 1980 and have never not finished a race. About 3/4 of a mile from the finish, I realized that I had to stop and that was my last semi-clear thought. The next thing I know is I was laying face down along the side of the Trail. Runner after runner stopped - most of them women - and one offered to stay with me. Whoever you are, thank you for being so nice. I sent you on your way, but I have not forgotten you. Two other kind souls, a man and a woman, got me to my feet and I want to thank them as well. I was so out of it, I don't even have memory of faces.

I wish that I could thank you all in person, This is as close as I can come to that. To have people sacrifice their race time to care for me, has really touched my heart. As I said, runners are good people. Thank you.

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, or Combined Federal Campaign Contributor Choice option #9308 where you work.



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Results from the South Hills Penny Day by Peter Kohnke

The Pennies for the Trail Day on October 13 was quite successful. The Peters Friends collected \$715, the South Hills Friends (South Park, Jefferson, and Clarirton) collected \$1227, and the Bethel Friends \$1588, for a total of \$3530! Thanks to all the volunteers who made it happen.

Always fun is to note the other things that got collected. This year we got, among other things, a Chuck-E-Cheese token, a penny run through a machine to make a souvenir medallion, a plastic penny, assorted screws and other small hardware, and coins from Canada, Mexico, Bahamas, Cayman Islands, India, Great Britain, Czech Republic, as well as Euros and an Austrian Schilling (predating the Euro)

