



## The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual IKEA/Montour 1/2 Marathon and 5K Run and Walk "Running Thru Raindrops" by John Hooton with Phyllis McChesney, photos by John Hooton

For only the second time in the 12 year history of our premier organized running event, somewhat cooler temps and a welcome sprinkle (Giant Eagle's veggies should have it so good), accompanied our runners. At least one man said, "I love it!" and who is more thrilled at these events, the runner/walker who makes it or the family/friends who cheer them on?



Repeat winner Matt Muerer

Over 900 participants shared the day-600 in the 1/2 marathon alone-along with parents and friends. Finishing times were a bit slower than last year, perhaps because of the trail being a bit slippery and the "under repair" condition of the roadway leading to it.

Many door prizes were given away and of particular interest were the winners' prizes: 18" high ceramic "wine coolers" for the first 5 half marathoners and 12" high "bean pots" for the first five 5K runners. Each was inscribed in a heritage print with the event name and order of finish. This was a clever touch and departure from most race awards!

The new Chair for the '07 event was Laura Orr, ably assisted by her husband, Bill, and the 85 plus volunteers. Congratulations to them and all who helped make it such a successful event. "Another new addition this year was

The women winners

Angela Cubbison as Director of Registration. She and her husband Burt stepped in beautifully. Registration is an involved task- no one likes to have his/her name spelled wrong! Many thanks to you both. And welcome to our great crew of volunteers!" (continues on page 4)

## South Hills Friends Complete Safety Project by Dave Oyler

The Montour Railroad built a number of types of bridges to cross the many streams in its path. The bridge across Catfish Run in South Park Township (mile 37.8) is a simple steel reinforced concrete beam 25 ft long and 28 inches deep with a shallow trough to hold ballast. In 1997 when the Montour Trail Council developed trail in South Park Township between Brownsville and Triphammer Roads the ballast was left on the bridge and a thin layer of crushed limestone trail surface was laid on top (see photo). The trail surface was brought flush with the top of the trough.



Photos by Dave Oyler

In 2006 the South Hills Friends were organized to maintain the trail in South Park Township, Jefferson Hills Borough and Clairton, a total of 4.9 miles of developed trail and 4 miles of shared road between mile markers 35.3 and 46.3. In the summer of 2006 the Friends decided that our first major project should be safety railings for several bridges in South Park Township and the Catfish Run Bridge became our first target.

Project Manager John Becker and South Hills Friends President Paul McKeown made an estimate (continues on page 4)

For your consideration

It's not so important who starts the game but who finishes it.

John Wooden

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Visit the Montour Trail web-site at:  
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**The Prez Sez**

Well, this August I finally made the bike ride from Cumberland, Maryland back home on the fully completed 135-mile stretch of the Great Allegheny Passage with connection to the Montour Trail. Three friends and I, with the aid of our helpful SAG driver (who will never trust MapQuest again) made the hot, muggy, yet pleasant three day trip with overnight stops in Confluence and West Newton.

Although this was hardly my first such bicycle trip, this one was the most satisfying in the sense of experiencing the completeness of the trail. Save for one very minor detour around the Bollman Bridge, sitting in place on its abutments but awaiting final touches, we had clear sailing the whole way. I hope it is not too many more years before I can enjoy the same satisfaction in riding the Montour Trail uninterrupted from Coraopolis to Clairton.

I was pleased to notice the signage improvements that our sister trail organization, the Steel Valley Trail Council, made in the on-road connection between Clairton and McKeesport through Glassport. Although a couple of turns could still use better directional signage, two of my fellow riders who had never traveled this section of the SVT led the way to the Montour Trail without incident and without benefit of the printed directions on our website.

Perhaps you've observed the same thing that I have on the Montour Trail this year – a noticeable increase in the frequency of encountering distance bicyclists making their trip to or from Washington DC. We're pleased about that. Although we recently experienced a small delay in a part of the project's completion when we had to go out for re-bid, when completed, our ongoing trail construction project in West Peters will remove the most formidable off-trail bypass that Montour Trail tough-cyclists now have to contend with. With hard work and some luck, by the end of next year, we'll have that section complete enough to hold a ribbon cutting ceremony.

In closing, I want to remind all Montour Trail Council members that they are invited to our annual dinner meeting that will be held in on Sunday, November 4. **As this will be your only reminder about the annual meeting and to vote for 2008 board members**, please see the enclosed details about the annual meeting, or if you can't join us, then simply vote.

Remember your trail etiquette, and encourage others to follow suit.

Passing on your left,

**Mark**

**Mark also wants to remind everyone that our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC ) charity code for MTC donors is now 19345.**

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 and Robinson 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 from the Editor's Desk

On October 10, 2007, the Montour Trail Council marks the 15<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Cecil Section of the Montour Trail, the first section of Trail built by the MTC. That celebration took place on a beautiful Saturday morning in Cecil Park at the west end of the 4.4 mile section that was constructed that summer connecting Hendersonville and its park with Cecil Park. This section in Cecil was chosen for its simplicity.

There was only one bridge, Papp Road, and it only needed railings and it had a solid wooden deck. The only major impediment was the 632-foot-long National Tunnel which featured "running water" and still does to this date. The running water dates back to the days of the Montour Railroad when it was not unusual for a locomotive to lose a window or two because of ice stalactites in winter. A french drain would be constructed to carry the water out of the tunnel and a loose gravel surface was laid down to keep water from pooling.

Much of this work was done by volunteers, especially the fencing, signing and brush grubbing. The heavy construction (grading the surface, placing the surface material and drainage), was awarded to Sluciak Contracting. Today, we do much of this type of work ourselves. Two key personnel in this effort are pictured to the right representing the Cecil American Legion who presented the Colors at the celebration that morning. Unfortunately Don Berty and Niles "Doug" Douglas are not here to mark this occasion but I know they are watching over us.

Don was a member of the Cecil Township Parks and Recreation Board and an officer of the American Legion. Many of the volunteers and original members of the Cecil Friends of the Trail were Don's recruits from the Legion. A large part of the reasoning behind constructing the Cecil Section was Don's efforts.

Doug was a hard worker and always had time for a story. I remember the day walking up the "path" that would soon be the trail and running into Doug who was swinging a scythe cutting grass at what would be the Kurnick Plot. And then the day after the opening, seeing him walking out of the National Tunnel his head held high, proud of the accomplishment and cornering me for 20 minutes praising the volunteers and the Trail Council for making it possible.



Photo courtesy of Bill Metzger

Ikea continued from page 1

And notice the logo on Angela's shirt. Don't you love the graphics - the locomotive that drove the trail when it was The Montour Railroad and the Runner(s) who populate it now. Thanks go there to Cathy Hughes. She designed our shirt last year as well.



Angela and Burt Cubbison

Much credit is due to IKEA and the many sponsors:

Presenting sponsors include IKEA, Elite Runners and Walkers and Dick's Sporting Goods; Corporate sponsors include: Comcast, Verizon Fios, The Mall at Robinson, Chick-fil-A, NuGo Nutrition, Penn Allergy, and OrangeYouActive.com, Supporting Sponsors include: Great Harvest Bread Company, Interstate Communications, Mr. John of Pittsburgh, Salvation Army of Pittsburgh, Swindell Dressler and North Park Clubhouse..

We will be reporting the economic impact of this year's event in our next issue of the trail newsletter, but we thank everyone who has helped us to bring in well over \$100,000 in cash over the last several years along with the volunteers hours that make the event happen.



5K winner Jay Doimage



Runners await the start

South Hills continued from page 1

of \$1300 for the required materials and tools. A request was made to the MTC Board for funding which was approved in April 2007. John Becker both donated and purchased steel to make sockets to fasten posts onto the bridge and fabricated the sockets, including welding the bottom plates to the sockets and painting them.



Left to right, Rich Sahar, Kim Becker, and Tim Schumann.

In June the Friends removed the trail surface from the bridge (about 15 yards of ballast and trail surface material) to allow access to the deck to install the sockets. At the time we intended to recontour the trail surface and leave the bridge deck uncovered permanently. However, while removing the trail surface from the deck it became obvious that it would not be feasible to bring the trail back to a smooth contour unless the trail was regraded for 50 to 100 feet west of the bridge. Over the next few weeks we also observed deterioration of the exposed deck and we decided that the deck was better off covered with stone. The Friends requested \$600 from the Board to purchase stone to resurface the deck and bring the trail back to its original contour. The funding was approved at the July Board meeting.

On July 20 a work party drilled holes in the deck and used epoxy to install anchor bolts in the deck. On July 21 a work party led by John Becker installed the sockets and posts on the bridge, dug holes to install posts on the bridge approaches and installed the railings. Over the next few weeks the finishing touches were made to the railings and concrete pads were poured around the bases of the sockets, which because of the uneven deck had been installed above the deck using nuts to level the posts.

During the week of August 19 a load of #10 AASHTO, the familiar Montour Trail surface material, was delivered and on August 25 the Friends covered the bridge deck with 2A limestone followed by #10 AASHTO trail surface material.



The project required nearly 100 hours donated by 10 volunteers (most of them by South Hills Friends members), not including design, project meetings

and shop time to build the sockets. The volunteers participating in the project were Project Manager John Becker, his daughter Kim and his brother Jay, Ed Bickar, Rich Hatch, Rich Kraeuter, Paul McKeown, Dave Oyler, Rich Sahar, and Tim Schumann.

Most of the material costs were paid by MTC member dues and donations. The railings cost \$1048 including materials and tools (but not including some materials donated by members of the South Hills Friends) and the stone for resurfacing the bridge cost \$480, for a project total of \$1528.

### The Top 5 from the IKEA Montour Trail 1/2 Marathon and 5K

Men 1/2 Marathon		Men 5K	
Matt Meurer	1:12:35	Jay Doimage	0:15:22
Leslie McIntire	1:14:44	Travis Simpson	0:15:30
Greg Byrnes	1:15:29	Charlie Ban	0:15:42
Eric Anish	1:16:08	Steven Garland	0:16:28
Hans Rottmann	1:16:14	Tim Miller	0:16:49
Women 1/2 Marathon		Women 5K	
Megan Duerring	1:21:30	Jocelyn Smith	0:18:30
Mindy Sawtelle	1:24:31	Jeannette Boyd	0:19:28
Michelle Corkum	1:26:01	Erin Gemmill	0:19:57
Nancy Janicak	1:29:43	Ashley Rabe	0:20:21
Robin Garber	1:30:22	Kari King	0:21:00

Results are courtesy of Runners High, the official timing service of the Ikea/Montour Trail 1/2 Marathon and 5K. For complete results goto [www.runhigh.com](http://www.runhigh.com)

## The Trail Needs Your Helping Hand

by John Hooton



Our Montour Trail is in its 18<sup>th</sup> year and modesty aside, what great progress we have made. By the end of 2008, we should have 45 miles of Trail in use, 38 miles of it continuous. However, there can be a “dark” side to finishing all 46 miles from Coraopolis to Clairton. What happens next?

Several years ago, longtime volunteer, attorney Dick Wilson, cautioned that public funds are not generally available for trail operation and maintenance and some expenses almost never qualify

- equipment purchases and professional fees are just two of them. Dick then suggested and helped set up our Endowment Fund. When it is mature and Trail activities are centered more on maintenance than new construction, we will have a source to draw on. Now in its third year, The Pittsburgh Foundation reported our fund was worth \$62,500 on June 30, 2007. Not bad for its young life, but consider our needs:

If we, before too long, will need \$100,000 per year to supplement annual giving so we can replace worn-out machinery and keep up with Trail repairs, a 6% safe withdrawal rate requires a fund to be worth \$1,700,000!

**Like the proud grandpa and his little charge pictured above,** we need your “helping hand” to maintain the wonderful Trail you have come to use, love and perhaps...take for granted.

This newsletter reaches you with much of the year behind us, but still there is time for you to plan constructive giving, for the things YOU care about. We ask that the Trail be one of them- either for annual giving or a donation to The Endowment Fund (that gift keeps on giving). Donating appreciated property to the Trail as a charitable organization saves you capital gains tax on the potential profit when it is sold.

Your thoughts are directed also to gifts you might make as a part of your estate plan. There are certain tax advantages in annual giving and if estate taxes figure into your calculations, it applies there too. Then too, a life insurance policy can make an excellent donation. Call any Board member for details on how to take the next step.

## PayPal Membership – Pitches & Glitches

The MTC has had the ability for new members to join or current members to renew their membership online for about two years now, with some limited success. Less than 5% of our membership base presently takes advantage of PayPal membership renewal, even though in the long run this option for renewing membership offers the promise of translating into cost savings for the MTC. So, one purpose of this article is to make a pitch for renewing your membership online with PayPal when you get your renewal reminder in the mail.

A second reason for this article is to alert a small number of those who took advantage of on-line renewals to a glitch that we had in July with PayPal membership renewals. As we changed our PayPal email account from Adelphia to Comcast, as many of you have also had to do this year, a snafu in making the transition caused would-be Montour Trail Council membership renewals to have their on-line transactions refused and returned to them. Therefore, if you are among the few who tried to renew your membership on-line between July 5 and July 25, please try again. We really do want you to renew – honest! We apologize for the inconvenience this email change may have caused you.

The problem with PayPal has been fixed for many weeks now, and several membership renewals have been processed since then, so there is nothing to worry about regarding your membership being processed. Our membership chair, Bernadette Albertson, has everything under control. As she said when PayPal memberships were being discussed at a recent MTC Technology Committee meeting, “Renew online, and save a tree,” adding one more reason to give online renewal a try.

## Trail Guidebook Kickoff Meeting Set for October 16 at MTC HQ

A guidebook to the Montour and Panhandle Trails is now in the works and a kickoff meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 16 at 7:00 p.m. at MTC Headquarters at 304 Hickman Street, Suite 3, Bridgeville. The purpose of the meeting is to explain the steps necessary to research and produce the book and to identify sources for potential images and information.



The meeting will be conducted by Bill Metzger who will be the author and publisher of the book, and Bill Orr, the MTC project coordinator.

Metzger will show photos already acquired and discuss the outline of the book and the format that will be used. The Montour book will be similar in format to Metzger’s “Great Allegheny Passage Companion.”

“The trails run through a fascinating and historic area of southwestern Pennsylvania,” said Metzger, “and the guidebook will not only deal with the railroads on which the trails are built, but coal mining, oil drilling, farming, milling, manufacturing, and whiskey distilling will be discussed as well.”

Other topics will include histories of trailside communities, the Whiskey Rebellion, and biographies of significant individuals, along with detailed maps and historic photos.

“We want this book to be both educational and entertaining,” said Orr, “and the most complete work on the trails possible.”

This first phase of the project – research and image acquisition – is being funded by a grant from Rivers of Steel.

## MONTOUR RAILROAD HISTORY BY BOB CIMINEL

**Montour RR and Pittsburgh Coal Company Shaft the PRR**

*photo from the Gene P. Schaffer Collection*

York Central's Pittsburgh & Lake Erie at Montour Junction, the Wabash and Pittsburgh Terminal at Southview and Longview, U.S. Steel's Union Railroad at Mifflin Junction, and archrival Baltimore & Ohio at Snowden.

Shipping coal on the PRR's competitors wasn't bad enough, the Montour went and stole four coal mines right out from under the PRR. These were the Shaw Mine at Midway, the Midland Mine near Houston, the National Mine at National Hill, and the Montour No. 4 Mine at Lawrence.

The Shaw Mine was served by the PRR's M&O Branch (Midway and Oakdale) which extended northward from Midway. After completing the Montour Extension, the Pittsburgh Coal Company opened Montour No. 9 Mine at McAdams on Route 980, and connected it to the Shaw Mine. All the coal that used to ship on the M&O went to the Montour. In 1922, Montour opened the Midland Branch at Gilmore Junction to reach the Morris Mine. Five years later, the branch was extended out to Westland where the coal company opened the Westland No. 1 Mine directly opposite the Midland No. 3 Mine on the PRR's Palanka Branch. Midland shut down and Westland operated into the Eighties and had the honor of being the last mine operating on the Montour RR before it was abandoned.

At the same time it opened the Midland Branch, the Montour also built the Muse Branch to the National No. 3 Mine. Five years later U.S. Steel closed the National No. 2 Mine (served by the PRR's B&M (Bridgeville and McDonald) Branch out of Bridgeville) and assigned its remaining coal reserves to National No. 3. The National No. 3 Mine shipped its coal on the Montour until it closed in 1951. Montour No. 4 Mine originally shipped its coal on the PRR at Lawrence west of Mayview, but the coal company moved the tipple to Hills on the Montour and began filling coal cars on the Montour RR.

The Montour did have three connections with the PRR at McDonald, Hills, and Pennmont, so a lot of coal still rode on PRR rails, but this was what is known as line haul, which has much lower rates than switching. By owning the Montour, the Pittsburgh Coal Company was able to load the cars on its own line, turn them over to the PRR for long distance hauling, and collect per diem on each car if it remained off the Montour rails for more than 24 hours. The coal company and the Montour were two-time winners. The perfecta came in 1928 when the coal washer was built at Champion.

To say the Pennsylvania Railroad had a lock on the coal mined in southwestern Pennsylvania would be an understatement. Until the mid-1920s, the PRR was essentially the only game in town. Records show that up to 75 trains a day operated on the Chartiers Branch between Washington, Canonsburg and Carnegie, where the branch joined the Panhandle mainline. There were coal mines strung out along the mainline west of Carnegie all the way to Collier, W.Va.. The PRR was getting rich on black diamonds at the expense of the colliery operators.

However, when Pittsburgh Coal Company purchased the Montour RR in 1900-1901 and then committed funds to build the Mifflin Extension they stuck a competitive railroad literally in the PRR's backyard. Not only was the Montour privately-owned but it

also connected with the PRR's biggest competitors – New

*Bob Ciminel is the founder of the Montour Railroad Yahoo group ([http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour\\_rr/](http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/)). There are currently 183 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 Montour Trail Council would like to welcome these new members and thank them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have renewed their membership and remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.

## New Members

Ken Berry  
Karen Bolden  
Paul Brecht  
Margaret H. Brown  
Earl & Marta Bugaile  
Angela Cubbison  
Leslie B. Evans  
A. Kamper  
Sandra Kizina  
Kristina Kushmerek  
Ed & Sandie Mialki  
Kathy Paschke  
Joseph B. Reynolds  
Gerald E. Rhine  
Judy Ricci  
Chris Seigh

Alan Stehman  
John & Lindsay Totten  
Sonja van Dijk  
Cyndee Welsh  
Susan Wetherell

## Benefactors

David & Carol Eibling  
Dave & Veronica Mattson  
Daniel W. McKenna  
Wayne & Cindy Pfrimmer  
Helge H. Wehmeier

## Leader's Circle

Aldo Angelo  
Sam Hvitfelt  
Robert & Teresa Williams

## Readers Speak

I'm an Emsworth resident and I'm ashamed to say I've enjoyed many wonderful rides and dog walks along the trail, but let my membership lapse long ago! I just re-upped tonight with a family membership, which includes my wife, Paulette, who joins me on the trail sometimes.

Thanks to the MTC for all you've done to create and maintain this treasure!

You may have come across my website, The Bicycle Exchange, aka Bikexchange.com. I'd like you to know that I'm also the editor of a book coming out this November (details at [www.BikeBook.net](http://www.BikeBook.net)) with 32 stories and 43 cartoons by a corps of talented writers and artists who love to ride bikes. Most importantly, there's a story by Pittsburgher Jim Brink about learning to love mountain biking through biking the Montour Trail daily one summer. It's a great story. The name of the book is The Bicycle Book: Wit, Wisdom & Wanderings, and the story I mention is "It's Alright to Ride Upright: An Ode to the Mountain Bike and the Railbed Trail."

Best,  
Jim Joyce, Editor and Founder  
Bikexchange.com: The Bicycle Exchange

*Editor's note. Readers are encouraged to share their comments and ideas through this corner. Messages submitted vial email at [newsletter@montourtrail.org](mailto:newsletter@montourtrail.org) will be considered for publication in an upcoming issue. Comments may be edited for space consideration*

## I want to help complete the Montour Trail!

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

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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 #19345 where you work.



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