The 21st Annual Montour Trail Half-Marathon & 5K Run - A Family Affair!
By Phyllis McChesney. Pictures by Dave Borrebach

The weather was hot, muggy and humid on Saturday, September 10 but that didn’t discourage the enthusiasm of the participants of the 21st Annual Montour Trail Half-Marathon & 5K Race. There was plenty of water on hand to keep the runners hydrated and cheering from friends, family and volunteers as they crossed the finish line. The top three finishers and their times:

**Half-Marathon, Male**
1. Jesse Bender, Monaca 1:25:45
2. Gregory Byrne, Pittsburgh 1:28:14
3. Tim Flynn, Pittsburgh 1:29:48

**Half-Marathon, Female**
1. Anna Shamey, Pittsburgh 1:33.10
2. Adrienne Ruzicka, Pittsburgh 1:39:24
3. Christine Forrest, Pittsburgh 1:42.29

**5K, Male**
1. Arjun Mishra, Pittsburgh 19:56
2. Joe Schuchert, State College 20:05
3. Cameron Diggins, Sewickley 21:33

**5K, Female**
1. Julia Kubinski, Sewickley 21.40
2. Reagan Diggins, Sewickley 22.45
3. Sarah Newton, Sewickley 24.19

This event attracts many families who run together. Cameron Diggins, our 3rd place male finisher in the 5K, is only ten years old and it’s his first race this year. Cameron took some time off to play soccer and returned to running this year. Our 2nd place female finisher in the 5K, Reagan Diggins, sound familiar, is Cameron’s thirteen year old sister. The Carrier duo, mother Michelle and twelve year old daughter Kacie, both finished first in their age category in the 5K. **Continues on page 5.**

Pleasant Street Construction Progress by Dave Oyler and photos by Dave Borrebach

In the last Trail-Letter, we reported that trail construction between the Library Viaduct and Pleasant Street would be starting soon. As anticipated, construction began in mid-July with excavation starting on July 19. As of September 13 the primary trail excavation has been completed with an estimated 11,000 cubic yards of material excavated and 8,000 cubic yards removed from the site. Roughly 2,700 cubic yards were used to raise a portion of the trail right of way and another 800 cubic yards were hauled across Pleasant Street for use in the first stage construction on the Consol property. The rest of the Consol construction will not begin earlier than mid-2017, and may not start until much later.

Construction of the 940 foot Pleasant Street trail section can be divided roughly into four stages: trail excavation, now essentially complete; construction of storm water handling structures; final trail grading and asphalt paving; and finally installation of fences, signage and landscaping which includes grass, screening plants at the borders of the trail property and plants in the rain gardens are part of the storm water handling installations. **Continues on page 8**
The Prez Sez: An Enduring Curve

Coming back from central Pennsylvania the other week, I traveled through Altoona to visit the Horseshoe Curve. This famous landmark, first ever of its type, is that marvel conceived by J. Edgar Thomson to enable his Pennsylvania Railroad to get over the Allegheny Mountains, connecting the east coast to Pittsburgh and the greater midwest. The Curve has been in continuous use since it opened in 1854, and still sees about seventy trains a day. In an hour and a half, I observed two eastbound and four, including an Amtrak passenger train, westbound.

The Montour Railroad, built for a different purpose, traced a much larger curve around Pittsburgh. We are fortunate to have its old right of way carry the Montour Trail on its back. In a nod to Thomson, we have inherited the flattest possible path through the hilly terrain that defines these parts. Given a little motive power, our wheels (first railroad and now bicycle) can make the grades out of the valleys to take the big sweep around the trail’s curve. And, although we may think of Montour as primarily serving Pittsburgh’s suburbs, it also provides a significant ease-west connection. The tie to the Great Allegheny Passage and the C&O gives access to east coast areas; in Coraopolis will be the connection to the Ohio River Trail, when it gets built, and the whole of the country that stretches to the west.

But of course the aspect of the Horseshoe Curve that we would most aspire to emulate is its long and faithful life of service. What would it take to have the Montour Trail still busy a century and a half from now? Well, for starters there would have to be a steady stream of people who want to use it. It seems a safe bet that people will still be walking, and will want to have a nice place to do so. And although bicycles and cycling itself will evolve as time moves forward, the sport as a whole is likely to continue and to be a big part of Montour use. Along with skiers, nature lovers and everything else, we should have plenty of trail travelers.

Success in getting those users to express their appreciation for the trail, in ways that support its upkeep, will continue to be a challenge. Let us hope that we will not need to resort to user fees, as some trails have. We will have to continue to find new ways of encouraging trail users to really understand that their strong support is what’s needed to keep the trail in place and in good condition for them, and for everyone.

With trails, more of the focus is on the journey and less on the destination. So, it will continue to be important that the trail itself remains in good condition. This is hard enough right now with grooming the trail surface, keeping after the ditching and drainage, and staying on top of all the grass cutting and tree trimming and clearing. Keeping our structures in good condition is a whole different matter. To date, Montour has been incredibly fortunate to have been able to obtain the funding to really do our big major structures right, for example with new or newly reinforced steel, and concrete decks that should last for generations with little maintenance. Just as the Pennsylvania Railroad was known as “The Standard Railroad of the World” for its innovations, Montour has a good reputation throughout the trail groups, for the standards we and ATA have set for the high quality trail conversion of bridges and other structures. However, we have many other smaller bridges that are going to require a lot of attention in the decades ahead. Good thing that we are almost done adding to our inventory of bridges.

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Meet the MTC Board of Directors Nominees

During the Montour Trail Council annual meeting this November—see the separate flyer—MTC members will elect new Board members for the 2017–2019 term. There are five nominees:

Phyllis McChesney is deeply involved with all aspects of the Montour Trail Council and our signature events, and among many other things serves as the Board Secretary and the President of the Airport Friends. She’s currently a member of the Board, and is nominated for a second three-year term.

Jen Mosesso is a real estate and energy attorney with Steptoe & Johnson PLLC in Southpointe, and has been active in revitalizing the MTC’s Real Estate Committee. Jen lives in Moon Township with her husband Andy, and sons Jude and Luke.

Dave Tetrick is an avid user of the trail and is eager to focus on MTC’s Real Estate Committee. Dave works at Huntington Bank and serves as the Senior Vice President of Commercial Real Estate for Western PA and WV. Dave lives in Upper St. Clair and has two teenage girls.

Don Thobaben is looking forward to his 3rd term on the Board. Don is active on the Executive, Membership & Community Outreach, Engineering & Construction, OPS, and Camping Committees. Don and his wife Jackie live in Mt Lebanon, and he’s an Administrative Manager at Graybar Electric.

Deb Thompson is the MTC’s webmaster and along with her husband Dave Hajnik has served in this role since 2002. Now partially retired, Deb holds the position of Vice President of IT with Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.

See insert for ballot and more information on annual meeting.

The Prez Sez continues from page 2

The most important thing that will sustain Montour into a long future is people who love it and find ways to help keep it going, even if they can’t personally use it or physically work on it. No matter what changes may be ahead for the trail organization, volunteers will remain its absolute lifeblood. To serve all that length, all those communities, all of the public will take many persistent and committed people willing to give their time and talents. But look at it: We’ve got something right here that, done well, can really continue to serve its original intended mission, as it curves well into the next century. Are you on board?

Ned Williams
New Interpretive Signs Installed

Several new historical interpretive signs have been installed along the trail in recent months by the Montour Railroad Historical Society.

The first was installed at the Westland trailhead parking area, showing the history of the Westland Mines #1 & #2 near this site. The loading tipple at Westland was located near the current gas loading racks at the MarkWest rail yard.

Another sign was installed at the kiosk at Library Junction at trail mile 33.8. This sign depicts the operations and layout of the wye track making up Library Junction. The Library Branch of the Montour Railroad was built in 1918 to reach the then new Montour Mine #10 in Library. Parking is available about a quarter-mile away, at the trailhead lot on Brush Run Road.

The site of the Champion Coal Preparation Plant also had a sign installed at trail mile 12.1 near Rts. 22 & 980. Champion was the heart of Montour Railroad and Pittsburgh Coal Company operations, processing mine coal for over 50 years. Parking is available at the Boggs trailhead approximately ½ mile away.

The latest sign was erected at the site of the Henderson Mine at trail mile 26.8 in Cecil Township. Parking is available at the ball field and picnic pavilion in Hendersonville, or at the Tandem Connection lot about a quarter mile away.

Check out the many MRHS signs and displays denoting the history of the Montour Railroad along the trail.

Bi-monthly Photo Winner

This month we’d like to recognize Jeff Crossan’s photo which floated to the top of our esteemed judge’s list. Bet you didn’t know that the Montour is a “Time Travelin’ Trail” and Jeff’s photo taken from the trail near mile 30.5, looking at TA Robinson’s yard proves the point. You can check out all the photos or submit your own at www.montourtrail.org. Let’s see yours!

The Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) Donates 12 Acre Property to the MTC  By Dennis Pfeiffer

A little more than four years ago, the MTC began discussions with Dan Sharek, Director of Engineering Services for the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) about a property across from the Cliff Mine Road Trail head on Enlow Road. A meeting was also held with RIDC President Don Smith. The discussions were initiated due to the need for a property for a Western Corridor MTC maintenance garage.

Since the MTC central maintenance garage in Cecil was completed eleven years ago, the MTC has been looking for properties to buy or build an Eastern corridor and a Western corridor maintenance garage.

I am very happy to report that on August 15th the RIDC conveyed to the MTC the 12 acre property off Enlow Road. The MTC is very grateful to Dan Sharek, President Don Smith and the RIDC board in making this very generous donation and in working with us over the years.

RIDC conveyed property 497-A-8 to the Montour Trail Council (MTC). This property is over 12 acres and parallels Enlow Road. In addition to working with North Fayette Township on the public trail the MTC hopes to build a much needed facility for Montour Trail maintenance. This Montour Trail Westerner Corridor facility will be planned to have appealing aesthetics and screening on the green space property. “RIDC supports the expansion of trail connections to enhance bike and pedestrian access” stated Tim White, SVP Development, RIDC.

The property seems to be well suited for the Western Corridor maintenance garage. It has all of the utilities nearby, is 200 feet from the trail and is very close to being in the center of the first third of the trail.
Free Little Library Opening Celebration and Fun Walk

By Mandy Pryor

On Saturday, October 1 at 10 a.m. in partnership with the Cecil Friends of the Montour Trail, MP Marketing and PR held a free, family-friendly event “The Free Little Library Opening Celebration and Community Fun Walk.”

A “Free Little Library” is part of a literacy program where community residents “take a book and return a book” at their convenience to the free Mini-Library. Books in the Free Little Library are typically donated by local residents and frequent book swaps are encouraged.

There was a ribbon cutting on-site at the Ridgewood Drive trail entrance across the street from mile marker 23.5 where a brand new Free Little Library was erected on the Montour Trail. This will be the first Free Little Library located on the Montour Trail's 46 miles.

After the ribbon cutting, the group walked together along the Montour Trail to the Cecil Township Municipal Park (approximately 1 mile) where there was a follow-up event with treats, a caricature artist, as well as arts and crafts.

Walkers were encouraged bring a book to contribute to the Little Library, which will cater to both adults and children year-round. Walkers can donate the books at the Ridgewood Drive location. Please do not bring more than two books per person.

We want to thank Cecil Township Parks and Recreation for donating the pavilion for this event.

About the Free Little Library: “Take a Book, Return a Book”- https://littlefreelibrary.org. In 2009, Todd H. Bol built the first Little Free Library and placed it in his Hudson, Wisconsin front yard to honor his mother. The idea for the handmade book exchange with the motto “Take a book, leave a book” took hold quickly and has grown to over 35,000 community micro-libraries—one in every U.S. state and Canadian province plus 70 other countries around the world. The nonprofit organization encourages stewards to register their libraries so they can be shown on the world map and be included on the world map and be included in communications around events and special programming, such as “The Free Little Library Opening Celebration and Fun Walk in Cecil, PA.

21st Half-Marathon Continues from page 1

Jon Pavlakovich, age 71, another first place winner in his age category ran alongside his daughter and son-in-law Mary & Justin Sickles. It was great to see so many smiling faces!

A big thank you to Jesse Forquer, Director of Montour Trail Security, for coordinating the police departments and emergency medical services necessary for the safety of our participants and volunteers. The police departments of Moon Twp., Robinson Twp, Findlay Twp. and North Fayette Twp. as well as Robinson Twp. EMS, Valley Ambulance Authority and Northwest EMS volunteered their time. A special thanks to Allen Prevendoski for handling all the arrangements with STA (Student Transportation Association) for providing the buses and drivers for the shuttle service from the finish line to The Mall at Robinson.

This event could not be held without the generosity of our host and sponsor The Mall at Robinson. Shema Krinsky, Marketing Director, starts early in the year overseeing the event location and our needs. Thank you, The Mall at Robinson, for another great year!

Thank you to the staff of ProBikeRun and Elite Runners Race Management (ERRM) for their expertise in race planning.

Every year the Montour Trail Council is privileged to work with the volunteers and community groups who so generously give of their time to work at packet pick up, man the water stops and crossings and who all make it fun! Become a volunteer!

Trail improvements in Cecil Township

Driveway cuts were placed where the trail crosses Ridgewood Drive while the road was being re-paved in early September. Also there is a new gate arrangement at Tarr Heights Road (MP 25.5). The gates were moved to the side and bollards placed across the trail.
The Henderson Mine
By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

The Montour Railroad built its Mifflin Extension from North Star to Bethel Park in 1914 to service several coal mines being opened along that route. One of those mines was owned by the Henderson Coal Company. The Henderson Mine and its surrounding town of Hendersonville is at Mile 27 on the Montour Trail.

The mine was the typical two vertical shaft variety found in the area. One shaft brought men and supplies into and out of the mine and the other was used to bring coal out of the mine and into the tipple building for sorting, cleaning and loading into railroad hoppers for final shipment. The mine site was where the current ballfield is now located.

On either side of the ball field are two chain link fence enclosures. These are the locations of the two mine shafts, filled in and sealed after the mine closed in the late 1940's. Rail yards on either side of the mine complex held empty cars delivered to the mine and loaded cars to be picked up by the Montour Railroad. A siding ran along the Montour main line tracks from the west side of Morganza Road to about where I-79 crosses overhead today. After the mine closed, the siding remained in operation until 1980, when railroad operations ended in this area. Waste dumps on either side of Morganza Road can still be seen today. The slate and rock were dumped by larry cars running along the valley on an overhead tramway.

Coal mining is a dangerous occupation, as was evidenced on the morning of March 13, 1917, when a methane/coal dust explosion rocked the Henderson Mine, killing 14 miners. The explosion was attributed to a build-up of methane gas that resulted when ventilation doors were left open during a shift change. The gas may have been ignited by a spark from an overhead electric wire as a coal-cutting machine was being moved.

The town of Hendersonville grew up on the three hills around the mine. It was a typical coal patch community and had businesses to serve the miners and their families. The coal company built the miners' houses. There were boarding houses for the single men, a post office, tavern, social hall and company store.

The mine produced 228,500 tons of coal in 1936, with 292 employees. In 1942, the mine was sold to the Pittsburgh Coal Company, which at that time allowed the miners to buy their homes, thus taking the expense of maintaining them off of the company's books. As was the case at several mines in the area, mules were used in the mine to pull the mine cars to the tipple shaft. When there was no work, the mules would be brought up and let out to pasture on the hillsides above the miner's homes. The use of the mules also indicated that the coal seam was thick enough that the miners could stand upright in the mine.

One of the few remaining mine buildings is the brick home across the street from the ballfield. It contained the mine lamp house and the company doctor's office. On top of the hill were two large wooden water tanks to supply water to the town. In the hot summers, the wood would dry out and the tanks would leak. By August the tanks would sometimes run dry.

After a century of use, the company store is still being occupied, owned now by the Tandem Connection bike shop. It is one of the few remaining wood structure company stores in the area. As a company store it was run by Federal Supply Company and later by Champion Stores, subsidiaries of the coal companies. The three story store had everything that the miners' families needed. As at most mining communities, the store gave the miners a credit line for their purchases and payment would be deducted from their paychecks.

Across Morganza Road from the store was the Shangri-La, a tavern and bar which had some boarding rooms and a dance floor, lasting into the 1970's. On the other side, across Georgetown Road was a social hall, known as Dreamland, which was used for meetings, movies and social gatherings. The post office was in the old house on Morganza Road with a gas station across the street, making the corner of Morganza and Georgetown Roads the main gathering spot of the community.

Thanks go to Pam Nixon and Paul Katrenick for their pictures and remembrances of life in Hendersonville.

You can contact the Montour Railroad Yahoo group at [http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/](http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/montour_rr/) There are currently 352 members from across the country. You are encouraged to join. There is a wealth of information about the Montour Railroad at this location and you can pose questions of its membership, from whom you are sure to get an answer. There is also much information at [http://www.montourrr.com](http://www.montourrr.com).
Welcome New Members

The Montour Trail Council welcomes these new members and thanks them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have recently renewed their membership and to remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.

New Members
Christopher Aiken
Kristen Bardelli
David Barker
Michael & Gayle Bukowski
Geoffrey & Julia Coleman
Robert Falk
Marian & Bernard Fedak
Emily Golnazarian
George M. Golvash
Bernard Grimes
Lynne Lescott
Gordon McMurray
Jan Nobers
Dana Palmieri
Edward & Mary Ellen Pisula
Diane Reckless
Thomas Spataro
Brian Stark

Colette Steen
David Tetrick
Bill & Annette Volbers
Holly Wik

Benefactors
David Hall Family
Dave & Veronica Mattson
Art McSorley
Brian Stark

Leaders
David Oyler
David Tetrick
John & Mary Jo Wasco
J.A. Wunderlich, III

Meet the latest Trail Patrol Recruits by Jesse Forquer

John Breitigan (upper left) is from Washington County. He is a retired USAir Electronic Technician. Jessie Leschak (upper right) says she is interested in volunteering for other things in the area. She currently works for a software firm in Canonsburg where she lives and is on the Board of the Consol Credit Union.
THIS IS THE ONLY INVITATION
(There won’t be an additional mailing)

Make check payable to:

MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

And mail to Montour Trail Council
304 Hickman St, Ste. 3
Bridgeville, PA 15017

By Saturday, October 22nd!!

For further information, contact the MTC
at (412) 257-3011 or
mtcoffice@montourtrail.org

Directions:
The Marriott is located at 777 Aten
Road, Moon Twp. Take the
Parkway West exit 58 (going east
or west), to Montour Run Road.
Eastbound turn right onto Cliff Mine
Road. Westbound turn left onto
Cliff Mine Road. From either
direction Cliff Mine is just off of the
Parkway exit. On Cliff Mine Road
crossing west go less than 0.1 mile
and turn right onto Aten Road to
the Marriott parking area. The
Marriott is immediately adjacent to
the Parkway.

COME AND CELEBRATE ANOTHER YEAR OF
SUCCESSFUL TRAIL BUILDING

THE MONTOUR TRAIL
COUNCIL

ANNUAL DINNER
Sunday, NOVEMBER 06, 2016
5:00 PM
Cost: $25.00/ person
Pittsburgh Airport
Marriott
777 Aten Road
Coraopolis, PA 15108

Number attending _____ @ $25 each =_______
Additional donation __________ total _______
Name(s): ______________________________
Reception: 5:00pm  Buffet Dinner: 6:00pm
Cash bar.

Slate of Board Member
Nominees

Per our By-laws, members may be
elected for two consecutive three-
year terms and may be asked to
serve again after at least one year off
the board. See the Sept/Oct 2016
newsletter for a brief introduction to
each candidate.

Vote for no more than five:

Phyllis McChesney (2nd term) _____
Jen Mosesso (1st term) _____
Dave Tetrick (1st term) _____
Don Thobaben (1st term) _____
Deb Thompson (1st term) _____
Other_________________________

Please bring this ballot with you to
the dinner or mail to:

Montour Trail Council
304 Hickman St, Ste. 3
Bridgeville, PA 15017
by 10/22/16
Pleasant Street continues from page 1

The work is likely to proceed in roughly that order, although stabilization of the excavated slopes through the planting of grass will be performed along with construction of the storm water structures and should be completed before this article is published.

Although the excavation of the trail is the most visible part of the project, the storm water handling structures, two rain gardens and an infiltration trench contribute a considerable portion of the cost. The storm water handling structures are designed to insure that the new trail with its impervious asphalt surface will not contribute to the already high risk of flooding of Allegheny County streams. The rain gardens are large shallow bowl shaped areas filled with a deep, engineered mix of topsoil, wood chips, sand and gravel to form a highly permeable soil in which plants, chosen for their ability to transpire large quantities of water, have been planted. The soil is also engineered to allow rapid percolation of rainwater and snow melt into the ground water, where the water will then reach Piney Fork Creek slowly as ground water rather than entering the creek quickly as surface run off. The infiltration trench is a set of five large diameter plastic pipes set in an underground gravel bed to provide temporary run off storage capacity. The run off stored in the pipes will then slowly percolate into the ground water instead of instantly reaching the local storm sewer system. The infiltration trench will be buried under the trail near the trail entrance at Pleasant Street with only drain grates and a cleanout manhole visible at the surface. The infiltration trench serves the same purpose as the rain gardens, but takes up less surface area.

These storm water handling structures help to safeguard the infrastructure along, in this case, Piney Fork and Peters Creeks. The Montour Trail is simultaneously at risk and a beneficiary of efforts to reduce that risk. In 2013 flooding of Piney Fork Creek due to over 3 inches of rainfall in just a few hours led to the washout of 2000 feet of newly laid limestone trail surface. Replacement of the trail surface cost over $5,600 and at least 168 volunteer hours. Construction of the trail and its water handling structures will also benefit the Trail's immediate neighbors who have lived for many years with significantly wet back yards due to local drainage issues. Excavation for the trail will completely change the drainage patterns and eliminate the source of that water and the run off will now go into the Montour Trail's storm water handling system instead of creating soggy back yards.

Visitors to Pleasant Street may also notice an embankment constructed on the east side of Pleasant Street, on the Consol Energy property. As part of the Pleasant Street project the contractor used spoil material to construct a bench for the first 200 feet of Montour Trail on an easement on the Consol property. Construction of this bench required about 800 cubic yards of fill and Pleasant Street provided a convenient source of that fill, so it was constructed as part of the Pleasant Street project. About 70 truckloads or 800 cubic yards of compacted fill were hauled across Pleasant Street and placed on the Consol property. The construction reduced trucking costs for the Pleasant Street project and reduced the overall costs of both projects. However, completion of trail on the Consol property is not expected until late 2017 at the earliest.

The Pleasant Street trail construction should be nearly complete by the end of November, although most of the plants probably may not be planted until spring. Signage may or may not be completed before winter, but it is likely that the trail will be open before the snow flies.

The Montour Trail Council will have a public ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the combined Library Viaduct and Pleasant Street project, but the ceremony is likely to take place in the spring of 2017.