

# The MILEPOST

Mon/Yough Trail Council's Yough River Trail Newsletter

Editor: Terry Vota

April 2018

Volume 27, Issue 1

*One of the greatest gifts that you can give is your time.....*

## From the President By Mark Place (412) 877-0050

It is my honor and privilege to serve as the President of Mon/Yough Trail Council for 2018 after serving on the Board for the past 2 years.

As you will read elsewhere in the newsletter, 2017 was a year of many accomplishments. These would not have been possible without the generous financial support of our 500+ members, the support of our core volunteers who contributed over **4000 hours** of service last year to the organization and our corporate and foundation sponsors.

Where is your Mon/Yough Trail Council going in 2018 and will you share the journey?

My goal for the organization this year is to build on our 27 year history and grow for the future. Our Board of Directors is committed to working with other trail groups and trail organizations to learn and share ideas to enhance your trail experience whether biking, walking, hiking or running. We face many challenges moving forward. Our trail is world class; hosting users from 34 states and 7 country's last year, but it requires significant and constant maintenance, and the cost for things such as insurance, fuel, and parts for our trail maintenance equipment increase yearly.

The dictionary offers some common definitions of a **challenge** such as "*invite (someone) to engage in a contest*" "*he challenged one of my men to a duel*". I would like to think that we can avoid adding dueling to our many trail activities, but I would like to **challenge** each member of the Mon/Yough Trail Council to consider three actions that will help us grow.

1. I would like to challenge every member to double their support of the trail without spending a single penny more. If all 500+ members would add 1 single day of service to the trail we would double our volunteer hours

in 2018! Just 4 hours one day this year would make a huge difference. Regardless of how you use the trail, what your interest or skill set is, we are ready to leverage your participation. Come alone or get a group of family, friends or co-workers together and enjoy a trail support project while making a difference. Reach us at [mytchelp@thebostontrail.com](mailto:mytchelp@thebostontrail.com) to discuss a fun way to make a difference.

2. Think about family and group activities we can assist you with to better enjoy your trail. We already host many Scouting activities, student running clubs and school trips. Do you know that our free campground with river access, drinking water and picnic areas at the Dravo Cemetery area is only 1.5 miles from the parking lot at Buena Vista perfect for trail users of all ages? We are always interested in partnering with work, social or civic groups to better the trail.
3. Consider increasing your financial support. Soon we will be offering the ability to join/renew your membership online using both PayPal and credit cards. Donations will also be possible. We will also be offering credit card transactions at the Visitors Center at the Boston trail head making purchase of some great trail shirts, hats and snacks easier this year.

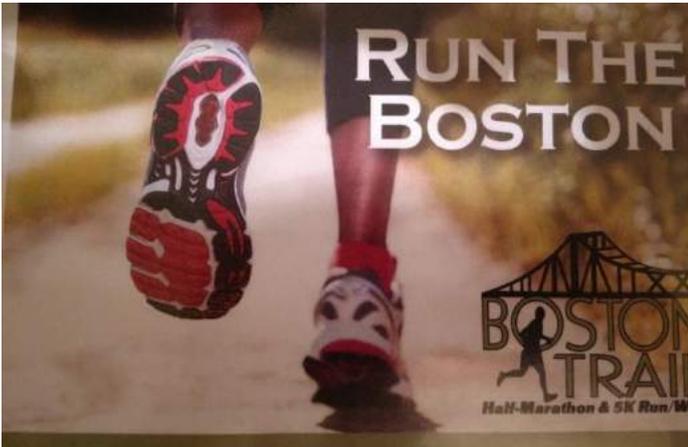
And lastly, when you see a group of trail volunteers in their safety orange shirts at work, please stop and say hello! We enjoy hearing about your trail experiences and frankly enjoy the excuse to take a short break.

## SAVE THE DATE

By Kathie Fawcett

**SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2018**

### Boston Trail Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk



100% of the proceeds help in the maintaining and improving the Boston trail. Staffed by volunteers who work to keep the trail looking its very best. Please come and help support this important fundraiser so that we can continue in making this trail the best it can be.

To register, go to [RUNSIGNUP.COM](http://RUNSIGNUP.COM) and for more information, go to [THEBOSTONTRAIL.COM](http://THEBOSTONTRAIL.COM)

## SAVE THE DATE

By Kathy Banfield

**SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 2018**

### Yough 'n' Roll / GAP 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Membership Appreciation Day

Come and celebrate with us! The Great Allegheny Passage was started 40 years ago. 40 years ago there was no Yough River Trail or Great Allegheny Passage. But there was a group of volunteers who had a dream that created the Great Allegheny Passage. Come and celebrate with us on June 9 from 11:00 to 1:00. Free hot dogs, snacks and refreshments will be served at the Boston Trailhead. Volunteers will staff the Visitor Center which is stocked with a variety of t-shirts and trail information.

The 27<sup>th</sup> annual Yough 'n' Roll will also be held on June 9th, 2018. The ride at your own pace event will take place along the Youghiogheny River Trail portion of the Great Allegheny Passage from Boston to Smithton. Come and join us to support your trail volunteers and enjoy a ride on the trail! This year's ride continues to be one of Mon/Yough Trail Council's most successful fundraising events, raising thousands for its mission of sustaining maintenance and operation of the trail.

The event consists of a choice of a 40-mile ride to Smithton and return or a 20-mile ride to Sutersville and return. Rest stops are manned by MYTC volunteers. Pre-register to receive an event T-shirt.

After the ride, hot dogs and refreshments will be provided as part of Membership Appreciation Day and our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the GAP celebration.

Registration brochures will be mailed to past participants. Brochures will also be available on the website. Walk-ups are welcome but are not guaranteed an event T-shirt. So please come join us on June 9<sup>th</sup> and enjoy a morning on our beautiful trail.



## SAVE THE DATE

By Christine Farrell Zacharia

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018**

### J. Terrence Farrell Memorial Bike Ride Our 5th Anniversary

**Saturday, September 29, 2018**, is set for the 5th Annual J. Terrence Farrell Memorial Bike Ride on the Mon/Yough Trail. Participants can either enjoy a 15 or 40 mile round trip autumnal bicycle ride along the scenic Youghiogheny River Trail beginning at Boston, Allegheny County, PA. The ride begins at 8:30 A.M.



My father, Terry Farrell, believed in McKeesport. He lived his entire life and practiced law, for the last 30 years, in

McKeesport. He has been quoted saying "McKeesport is one of the richest places to grow up and practice law in. I have always been proud of my old neighborhoods. I don't think I would trade my growing up in McKeesport for any other community." He spent much of his spare time involved in community organizations for the betterment of the McKeesport area.

To continue his legacy and blaze one of our own, we continue to support local organizations. This past year we made endowments, in my father's name, to the Carnegie Free Library of McKeesport, The McKeesport Heritage Center, The American Red Cross, as well as, Friends of the Riverfront, to name a few.



Christine Farrell Zacharia, with Terry's grandson, Jack

Because he was a cycling enthusiast, who put many of his miles on the Mon/Yough Trail, we made a donation of \$1000 to the Mon/Yough Trail Council.

Following the 2016 bike ride, we made a \$2000. donation to Variety, the Children's charity, for 1 adaptive bicycle for a child with special needs. After the 2017 bike ride, we will donate to sponsor 2 adaptive bicycles through Variety. It is my belief that all children should be able to feel the joy of riding a bicycle.

Each year, the ride, brings new and familiar faces. Our 5th year is going to be special. I look forward to September and meeting you on the trail!

## Boston Visitor Center

Bring on Spring!

By Marei Burnfield

The 2018 trail season is just around the corner and we sure are anxious to get it underway! On **Saturday, April 7, 2018**, people across the nation will kick off the trail season by visiting their favorite trails. We are joining in the celebration and will be opening the Visitor Center from 9 am to 11 am offering hot complimentary beverages and snacks!



During the winter months, we have been planning in anticipation of the warm, beautiful breezy blue-sky days that bring so many folks to the trail to walk, run, cycle, exercise their pets, or just enjoy nature. We look forward to meeting and greeting trail guests from near and far. We have new merchandise

available to purchase and all proceeds from the sale of merchandise support the ongoing trail maintenance. In addition to our dedicated returning volunteers, we hope to welcome new volunteers to help staff the visitor center. We intend to be open for the 2018 season on weekends beginning May 26, 2018. Our hours are 8 am until noon but may fluctuate due to volunteer availability and the weather! If you are interested in helping to staff the visitor center or have questions about hours of operation or merchandise, please contact Marei Burnfield at 724-972-2278.

### Regular Work Sessions on the Trail



MYTC holds regular work sessions during good weather on **Saturday mornings, meeting at 8:00** at the end of Locust Grove Road along the trail in

Greenock, off of East Smithfield Street about 2 miles upriver from the Boston Bridge. Many workers show up every Saturday to help. We could not survive without this heroic weekly effort. In 2017, a total of 40 volunteers helped on trail maintenance projects, putting in about 3,500 hours of their time to cut grass along our nearly 15 miles of trail, open up drainage ditches, cut fallen trees, stack firewood, repair and maintain equipment, build shelters, install benches etc.

## WMBU - Workingman's Mutual Beneficial Union Hall

By Terry Vota

As you ride the MYTC section of the trail, it is hard to miss that large red building at ~MP 119 in Blythedale.



It is home to the Workingman's Mutual Beneficial Union (WMBU). Some old records disagree but a group of ~10 men started the club in 1913 with the purpose of supporting local coal miners with pension, health and death benefits. The Club met in several different locations until the current lot was purchased in 1914 and the building completed in 1915. The Initial officers were; President-Frank Vitori; Vice President-Domenik Partizana; Secretary-Raffaele Valentini and Treasurer-Ernesto Lusetti

In the early days, the Club was the center of activity for the community. There was a large stage for concerts and children plays and a projector balcony for movies (probably silent).



At various times, it also functioned as a Soup Kitchen, Dance Hall, Recreation Center and Banquet Hall. Although the Charter has now changed, with women welcome as members, it was originally a male-only Club; as the name would suggest.

The Club is also proud that in 1947 it purchased the baseball field across the tracks and helped sponsor some great Daily News League teams.



Per conversations with current member Dave Kaminsky and officers Jerry Harn-President; and Alvin Chiesi-Treasurer (a 71-year member!), the Club went through some hard times with membership dwindling and debts increasing.

However, current Leadership has significantly improved the situation with membership now at ~ 350 members and finances more stable. Additional current officers include VP Paul Donnell and Secretary Diane Smith.

Dave shared his vision of restoring the upstairs dance hall to its glory days and perhaps even having the building achieve "historical status". Although GAP riders can admire the building, it is a **members-only** Club. They do open the doors on Tuesday for "Hamburger" night and on Friday (during Lent) for a Fish Fry. Also, on occasion, they bring in a group for dances.

If interested in membership, they do have a Facebook Page with information.

## SPRING DELIGHTS – A TIME TO SHINE

By Bob Cupp

During the 1970's and 80's, isolated areas on the west bank of the Youghiogheny River were used as garbage dumps. You could find abandoned furniture and appliances, tires, shingles, or almost anything imaginable along the idle Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad right-of-way. As a result of development of the Yough River Trail, the reclamation of this blighted landscape has been nothing short of spectacular. The



trash is gone and beautiful scenery, including many varieties of wildflowers, dominates the landscape. Have you seen the great white

trillium along the Yough River Trail, covering the steep hillsides, as though bright stars have fallen from the night sky? If you've ridden along the trail in late April and haven't seen them, you haven't been paying attention. White trillium brightens the landscape, much the same as the stars illuminate the sky. They are particularly abundant near YRT Milepost 123, south of Greenock, Milepost 116, south of the Sutersville Access Area, Milepost 101, south of Whitsett and farther south between Mileposts 95-99.

Trillium is, perhaps, one of the most well-known and favorite spring wildflowers in western Pennsylvania. Although I'm far from being a wildflower expert, the beauty of the white trillium fascinates me. Sometimes we have a tendency to take the natural beauty of the Yough River Valley for granted, but it's hard to ignore these elegant flowers.

Most likely, "trillium" comes from the Latin, "tri", which refers to many of the features of these plants that are divided into three parts. There are, generally, three leaves, three petals, three sepals (the green appendages behind the petals) and three pistils (the female parts of the flower). There are six (divisible by three) stamens, the male parts of the flower. The "lilium" portion of the name refers to the Lillium family (true lilies), of which the trillium is a member.

There are six species of trillium growing here in Western Pennsylvania, including snow, red, great white, nodding, sessile and painted trillium. Here in the deep, rich soils that retain moisture through most of the season, these plants have an opportunity to rise from the warming

soil, flower and ripen their seeds. In this brief window of opportunity, before the trees shade the forest floor, these early spring darlings spread their leaves, absorb the sunlight and restock themselves with food.

It doesn't take long for Mother Nature to cover the hillsides with undergrowth, hiding the trillium for another year. By mid-July, you won't be able to find a trace of these plants, but they are still there, waiting in the shaded soil for their time to shine next April. Don't miss them – take a ride on the Yough River Trail in late April, enjoy the scenery and discover these brilliant fallen stars! Please don't pick the flowers. Leave them for the enjoyment of future walkers and riders.

Ref: "Elegant Trilliums Are Embodiment of Spring", Tribune-Review, May 13, 2001, By Paul Wiegman

## The Big Ride - 500<sup>th</sup> National Trail Designation

By Dan Piesik

Tim Banfield was the leader of the ride that went from Boston to Connellsville in 1992. Several other members of the Pennsylvania Wheelmen were on hand to experience the historic occasion also. Bill Handel and Danny Piesik were among the local riders that completed the ride. And what a ride it was. Fresh ballast churned up by the removal of the P&LE tracks, standing pools of water, and of course mud - gooey, sticky, black mud had to be portaged around. As the frequency of poor conditions slowed the riders, many just attempted to ride through the muck. Trees downed and garbage strewn around the right of way also made things difficult.

The ride started out in Boston which had several tents with displays of nature and Rails to Trails materials. There were refreshments of course and a contest for the kids at Greenock School that showed bicycle and trail activities.

There were hundreds of people learning about the newly planned but not completed trail and how it could affect the neighborhood. A few people had negative comments, for they would not be getting the strip of land abandoned by the railroad, as the entire rail line would be "rail-banked". Almost everyone else was in good spirit and excited over the idea that a bike trail would be built. Many seniors and kids were wondering when the trail would be ready to ride. It was explained that the section from Greenock to Buena Vista would be constructed first. There was much excitement and enthusiasm that day.

One of the most enthusiastic riders was Tim Banfield with the Pennsylvania Wheelmen who was among the few experienced riders and was very concerned that all riders were safe and accounted for on the long ride. He rode sweep to make sure all were safe. This individual showed what kind of riders would be on the trail as an asset to the Yough Trail. It turned out that this sportsman would and does serve a vital role to trail operations till this day.

Now the ride was to begin and scores of riders rode through the canopy of balloons and signs marking the historic event that would be the beginning of unique facility - the Yough Trail. Off they rode!

The first stop was in West Newton, where a large crowd cheered the cyclists on. There were hundreds of well-wishers to cheer the group on while they refreshed. Dan, Bill, and Tim were fresh as ever chomping at the bit to get going. Off they went full of energy, not knowing what the path looked like, but one could imagine - lakes of water, mud, brush, and downed trees.

As they finally arrived in Connellsville, now looking exhausted, muddied, sweating, hungry and thirsty, the thrill of completing the journey set in. Fed, and given refreshment, the tee shirts of purple handed out, they lined up for group pictures. Tim, Dan, and Bill among others that finished the ride, joked that they were ready to ride back to Boston, but they were more than eager to get in the van for the drive back. This determined, young, enthusiastic bunch were leaders - they made history as the first riders - they were an example of what was to come down through the years.

The Yough Trail was initiated and recorded as one of the original 500 trails in the nation. It was the beginning, for as we ride today, all the hopes and planning became reality, but it was this bunch of riders that was first to stir up excitement and interest here in Boston and up the Yough River to Connellsville.

## Foundation Grant funds purchase of Dump Truck

By Tim Banfield

Mon/Yough Trail Council (MYTC) is pleased to announce the receipt in December 2017 of a grant from the Trail Volunteer Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation, to be used for acquisition of a Dump Truck for MYTC's 14-mile section of the Great Allegheny Passage along the Youghiogheny River in Allegheny County. This \$50,000 grant from the Trail Volunteer Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation will be supplemented by additional

matching funds provided by MYTC to purchase a truck chassis, which was acquired in March, and the dump



body, which is being manufactured separately to MYTC specifications and should be completed, installed and ready to use on the trail by

Memorial Day.

Trail advocates, Roy Weil and Mary Shaw, established the Trail Volunteer Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation in 2007 to provide grants to purchase tools, materials, and supplies to be used by volunteer trail projects that create, maintain, or enhance the network of trails suitable for bicycle touring in western Pennsylvania and interconnected trails in nearby areas. In this way the Fund celebrates and encourages the volunteers whose work has made such valuable contributions to western Pennsylvania's growing network of motor-free trails.

The Pittsburgh Foundation is the 13th largest community foundation in the country. Since 1945, it has worked to improve the quality of life in the Pittsburgh region by evaluating and addressing community issues, promoting charitable giving, and connecting donors to the critical needs of the community.

MYTC is excited to continue our relationship with these partners to make this major addition to our maintenance equipment roster which will help our volunteers complete the many tasks needed to keep our section of the trail in great shape for trail users from around the world.

## Thank You

By Eileen Lenart, Membership Chair

A sincere "thank you" to all those who have renewed their annual 2018 MYTC membership. We appreciate your faithfulness to the mission and vision of keeping the trail in the best possible condition. Warmer weather is just a few weeks, maybe just a few days, away. Then we can all be back on the trail biking, hiking, walking and enjoying being outdoors. See you on the trail.

## Council Directory

### Mission Statement

In 1991, the Mon/Yough Trail Council (MYTC) was founded to promote the rail corridor conversion to public access trails along the Youghiogheny River. Today, MYTC remains a non-profit, 501(c)3, all volunteer Pennsylvania corporation dedicated to sustaining trail maintenance and operations in order to encourage multi-purpose recreational use.

### 2018 Officers

#### President

Mark Place

#### Vice President

John Eisenbarth

#### Treasurer

Tim Banfield

#### Secretary

Mary Reid

### Directors

#### 2016 – 2018

Rich Kundman  
Belinda O’Keson  
Mark Place  
Terry Vota

#### 2017 – 2019

Tim Banfield  
John Eisenbarth  
Kathie Fawcett  
Eileen Lenart  
Dave Ringler

#### 2018 - 2020

Cathy Bartley  
Marei Burnfield  
Bill Hall  
Mary Reid  
Charlie Smith

### Meetings

You are welcome to attend informative monthly meetings, held 6:30 pm, the second Thursday of each month at the Greenock Fire Hall, Elizabeth Township.

### Contact us:

#### MYTC

P.O. Box 14  
McKeesport, PA 15135

[www.TheBostonTrail.com](http://www.TheBostonTrail.com)

### Mission

To do our part to enhance the enjoyment of all who are, and will, have the experience of traveling the Rails-to-Trails journey by promoting and performing the maintenance, repairs, restoration and beautification of our portion of the Great Allegheny Passage.

The Milepost is published by the Mon/Yough Trail Council with the support of the RTC. Articles published include Council activities, trail development, local and regional information, and other items of related interest. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and may not represent the official positions of the Council. Reprint of the publication prohibited without express consent of the originating author and/or the Milepost. Copyright 2005. All rights reserved.

## Membership Application

Yes, I want to be a member of the  
Mon Yough Trail Council

| Membership Level | Contribution |
|------------------|--------------|
|------------------|--------------|

- |                                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General    | \$20  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate  | \$25  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate  | \$250 |

Please check here if renewal

In addition, I would like to contribute  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the MYTC.

Please print:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Required*

\_\_\_\_ I would like to be contacted to volunteer.

\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive a membership card.

Please make checks payable to and  
mail to:

MYTC Membership

P.O. Box 14

McKeesport, PA 15135



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**Mon/Yough Trail Council**  
**PO Box 14**  
**McKeesport, PA 15135**  
[www.TheBostonTrail.com](http://www.TheBostonTrail.com)



*Mon/Yough Trail Council's  
Yough River Trail Newsletter*

*The following businesses have generously supported the Mon/Yough Trail Council.  
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The Elizabeth Companies  
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Foundation  
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