



TRAIL NEWS

Through the mountains - not over them!

THREE RIVERS HERITAGE TRAIL • MONTOUR TRAIL • STEEL VALLEY TRAIL
YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER TRAIL NORTH • YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER TRAIL SOUTH
ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS TRAIL (PA) • ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS TRAIL of MD

Volume 4, Number 2

Summer 2003

LETTER FROM THE PREZ

ATA'S OUTREACH ENCOURAGING ACTIVE AGING

ATA IS FINISHING UP a yearlong project aimed at encouraging more people, especially older adults, to use the trails for recreation, health and fitness. The program worked so well that National AARP CEO Bill Novelli recognized it by donating his prestigious Porter Prize monetary award to ATA to keep the efforts going.

Yvonne Merrill has tirelessly managed our Older Adult program, going to Senior Centers and events with the message that walking is a key to healthy aging.

Just about anyone can walk and it doesn't require special equipment or gear other than comfortable shoes and clothing. Health professionals agree that a brisk walk four or five times a week can do wonders for your well being and overall health. A walk can lift your spirits and keep them there throughout the day.

(Continued on Page 2)

BIG SAVAGE GIFTS MATCHED 2 to 1

Every dollar raised in the "buy a foot" for the Big Savage Tunnel project will be matched 2 to 1 by foundation grants. Two of our strong supporters, The Heinz Endowments and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, have pledged \$300,000 as a Challenge Grant. The value of each dollar raised for the tunnel will be tripled by foundation grants. All gifts made to date are included in the matching program.

The campaign total to date is \$94,000. Just \$56,000 more is needed to top out the Challenge Grants and make the rehabilitation a reality.

(Continued on Page 3)

Big Savage work progresses

"LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL"



Rolland "Rhody" Rhodomoyer at the north portal of Big Savage Tunnel.

Work is progressing nicely on the 3,300-foot Big Savage Tunnel, but it hasn't been without its problems.

"There were so many unknowns that we didn't find until we went inside the tunnel," according to Rolland "Rhody" Rhodomoyer, 60, resident construction manager for the ATA.

Circuit Rider Brett Hollern agrees: "Although there have been some serious issues, the contractor (Advanced Construction Techniques of Maple, Ontario) has been great to work with. They're doing a terrific job."

Work on the tunnel this season has included:

- Removing both tunnel portals.
- Replacing a major section of "drummy" concrete (hollow sounding when hit) with steel reinforced shotcrete -- a mix of sand, cement, steel fibers, air, and water that is applied through a nozzle.
- Building a 4-foot-high by 4-inch-thick concrete wall the length of the tunnel as a foundation for the shotcrete.
- Installing one inch insulation around the entire perimeter of the first 100 feet at the north and south portals to minimize ice damage.

(Continued on Page 3)

Watch www.atatrail.org
for Big Savage Tunnel
Grand Opening news!

"Buy a Foot Campaign"
is concluding!

See information on Pages 2 and 4.

Photo by Bill Merger

ACTIVE AGING

(Continued from Page 1)

Merrill formed partnerships with the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health and Pittsburgh Center for Healthy Aging, Pittsburgh City Parks Senior Interests, and AARP who share the goal of successful aging. Five Elderhostel events introduced others to the beauty and variety of recreation available in our region. Each program includes the Great Allegheny Passage.

Educational materials, including a photographic tour of the Great Allegheny Passage, were developed to inform older adults about the trails and encourage their use. "Where are the trails and how do I get there?" were commonly asked questions, and Yvonne finally figured out how best to answer.

With help from veteran guidebook author Mary Shaw, creative assistance from Anne Richardson and maps by Bill Metzger, Yvonne wrote "Great Little Walks in the Greater Pittsburgh Area." (See Page 4) This pocket-size book has all the information you need to use some of our more popular trail sections. It's already become quite a hot-seller!

Yvonne figures she has touched 5,000 people in her travels. Thanks to the Jewish Healthcare Foundation for their support of this project.

And a call is going out to aspiring authors: we're ready to start our next book, "Great Little Rides."

Linda McKenna Boxx

SAVAGE GIFTS

(Continued from Page 1)

ATA thanks the more than 400 individuals, groups, organizations, business, corporations, and foundations that have supported the project to date. Check our website for the list of our generous contributors.

All those who contribute by September 30, 2003 will be recognized on a permanent commemorative plaque at the tunnel, if they

**Buy your foot now!
See page 4 for
details.**

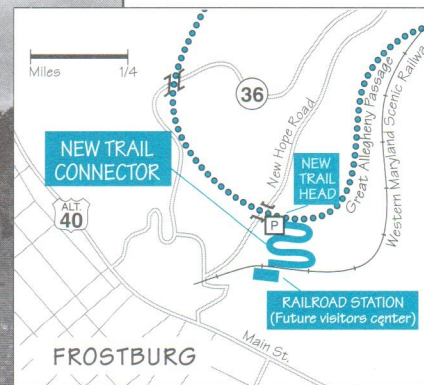
ATA WEBSITE WINS AWARD

American Trails, a national trail advocacy group, has recognized our website in a contest designed to "seek out the best websites in the cyberworld of trails and greenways." We won an Honorable Mention for Travel and Tourism for Trails.

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS IN MARYLAND



Photo by Bill Metzger



First construction on the Allegheny Highlands Trail of Maryland began in early May at the New Hope Road trail head, near Frostburg. The \$600,000 first phase includes parking, a rest area and a quarter-mile-long switchback trail up to the Frostburg visitors center. "This will get the trail to Frostburg in a way that's easily accessible to everyone," said trail board member Dave Cotton. The backhoe at the center of the photo is working at the future location of the trail.

HAPPY TRAIL USERS

COUPLE USES TRAIL TO "POINTS UNKNOWN"



Colleen and Ted Garringer

Ted Garringer, 55, and his wife Colleen, 52, sold their Connecticut home, quit their jobs and took off for "points unknown" on bicycles in January, 2003. They used the Great Allegheny Passage from Meyersdale to West Newton in April.

They crossed Salisbury Viaduct ("fantastic"), Pinkerton High Bridge ("breath-taking"), had lunch at Sisters' Café in Confluence, where Ted raved about the chili, talked to everybody they met, got rained on (surprise) and stayed a night each in Meyersdale, Ohiopyle, Connellsville and West Newton, where they picked up BicyclePA Route S for the trip west.

They enjoyed our "meticulously maintained" trail, especially the fact that for them it was all down hill.

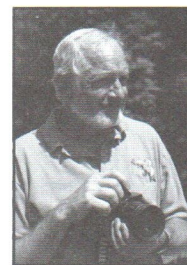
You can read all about their adventures and keep up with their progress across the country at www.foolsonamission.com.

2003 GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Ned Williams won the grand prize with his photo "Cucumber Falls." The category winners are:

Jim Clay, Action; Ned Williams, Volunteering; Robert Garitano, Nature; and Jim Clay, Wild Card. You can view all the winners at www.atatrail.org.

While you're out on the trail, take your camera - you could be next year's winner!



Williams

LANDSLIDES CLOSE DURA-BOND BYPASS

The Yough Trail's Dura-Bond Bypass in Liberty Borough between the 15th Street Bridge and Dead Man's Hollow has been closed until further notice due to dangerous slide conditions. **No trespassing is permitted on this section of the trail!**

Directions for the detour are posted at www.youghrivertrail.com

YOUTH HOSTEL CLOSED AT OHIOPOYLE STATE PARK

Ohiopyle's Youth Hostel has been permanently closed. According to Superintendent Doug Hoehn, the park is looking at "other options" for the site.

MONTOUR OPENS TWO NEW TRAIL SEGMENTS

The Montour Trail Council (MTC) opened the 0.7-mile Brush Run Connector on June 28, connecting the Arrowhead Trail in Peters Township with the Montour's Bethel Branch in Bethel Park, expanding the continuous trail to 6.6 miles from Route 19 to Logan Road.

Completion of this segment is the result of the April, 2002 agreement between Peters and the MTC to link the Arrowhead and Montour Trails into one system.

Funding for the \$107,000 project was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Department of Community and Economic Development. MTC volunteers did much of the construction of the trail and Alex Paris Inc. built the ramp up to Brush Run Road.

On May 3, MTC opened a paved 2.2-mile section from the Route 51/43 interchange at Large to Route 837 in Clairton. A portion of the trail was built by the Turnpike Commission as part of the Mon Valley Expressway project. A special asphalt paving designed for light traffic was used because this section is in the Peters Creek floodplain.

LIGHT AT THE END

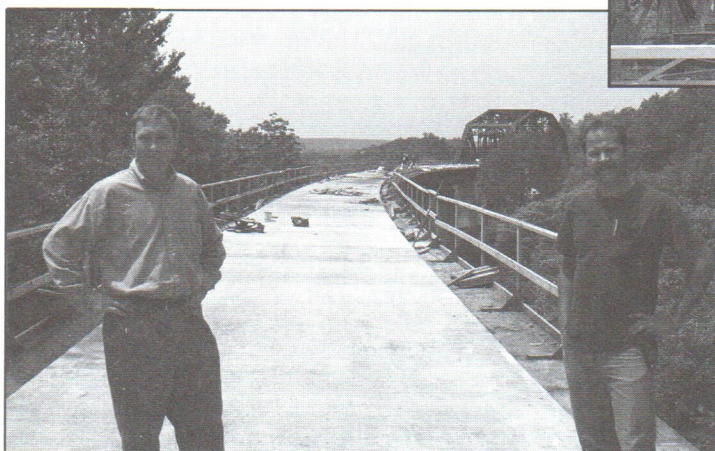
(Continued from Page 1)

- Installing 7000 rock anchors - hollow steel rods 6 and 12 feet in length, 1½ inches in diameter that expand under pressure to the shape of the rock to hold the tunnel walls in place. "The new method of drilling we're using is 50 times faster than the old method," explained Rhodomoyer. "We can drill a 12-foot-deep hole in a minute to a minute and a half."
 - Installing a new drainage system and raising the floor of the tunnel two feet to accommodate it. "The drainage layer is working," Rhody further related, "even with all this rain we've been having, the tunnel's dry as a bone."
- Work remaining to be done includes: reconstruction of both portals, installation of the shotcrete liner for the entire tunnel, surfacing the tunnel floor with six inches of crushed limestone, and installation of the lighting system.

The result, predicts Hollern, will be "a world-class attraction that we anticipate lasting for years to come without any major problems. I believe it will be the centerpiece of the trail system because of the structure, the views from the south portal, the experience of traveling through it," and, he adds, "it'll be a great place to spend a hot afternoon."

"We can see the light at the end of the tunnel," Rhodomoyer concluded.

NEW DECK FOR KEYSTONE



Circuit rider Brett Hollern (left) and Brian Baligush, an inspector for Hatch Mott McDonald Engineering, look over the new concrete deck on Keystone Viaduct. A new 237-foot-long self-supporting girder has been set in place and 336 yards of tinted concrete have been poured for the new deck.

Two piers and three spans were ordered to be removed to straighten out a dangerous S-turn in State Route 2006 east of Meyersdale.

Work is scheduled for completion of the \$1.4 million project in August.



West end of Keystone Viaduct

**Viaduct
rehab
to be
finished
in
August**

Photo by Bill Metzger

Mine waste product now valuable

Keystone Concrete Color Comes from AMD

WHY DOES THE CONCRETE DECK ON KEYSTONE VIADUCT HAVE A REDDISH TINT?

"The viaduct's overhead truss girders will deposit rust on the surface of our new concrete deck, so we may as well make it that color to begin with," explains ATA President Linda McKenna Boxx.

"We took a ballast rock from under the bridge and asked the contractor to match it," Boxx continued. Color for the tinting came from iron oxide recovered from an abandoned mine in western Pennsylvania.

Two thousand tons of the rusty deposit were reclaimed from Lowber, Pennsylvania, near West Newton. The old mine is a major source of pollution of Sewickley Creek, which flows into the Youghiogheny River. Discharge from the mine pollutes two miles downstream.

Iron Oxide Recovery Inc., a division of Hedin Environmental, did the reclamation work. According to Evan Verbanic, the company's business development manager and an environmental scientist, the project was funded under a Growing Greener Grant in cooperation with the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association and Congressman John Murtha.

When water comes in contact with pyrite in coal and the rock surrounding it, chemical reactions take place which cause the water to pick up in solution iron, aluminum, manganese, and other minerals. Precipitation of these minerals turns streams red or yellow, depending on the acidity. Hedin's passive treatment process removes iron from polluted water, using interconnected ponds and wetlands. Over time, the iron oxide is removed from the production ponds, and marketed.

Although principally used as a paint pigment, iron oxide also colors wood mulch, the concrete in PNC Park, dog food and tattoos. "But it's not just barn red," Verbanic relates, "you can blend it to make a variety of other colors."

Once processed, he says, "we sell every last pound of it to Hoover Color Corp. of Virginia." Hoover further refines and purifies the oxide.

"We like the symbolism of using something from AMD," says Verbanic, "why not use the stuff that's part of our post-industrial heritage?" He likes the Keystone Viaduct because it's "a great example of the use of our method."

SPONSOR A FOOT of the BIG SAVAGE TUNNEL FOR \$100 OR MORE

Nearly a century after Big Savage Tunnel was first dug, the ATA is working to rehabilitate this vital link in the Pittsburgh to DC trail corridor. It's a monster of a tunnel and you can help us tame it.

We are asking trail friends to support this huge project by sponsoring a one-foot section or more of the tunnel for **\$100, \$500, or \$1,000.**

All amounts are welcome; gifts of \$100 or more will be recognized, appropriately and permanently at the tunnel.

**DEADLINE FOR PERMANENT
RECOGNITION IS SEPTEMBER 30,
2003.**

Groups are invited to participate.

Yes, count me in! I've enclosed
\$ _____

My Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____
(optional--will allow us to contact you
with any questions concerning recognition.)

Name as it will appear on the sponsorship plaque.
(If the gift is in honor or memory of someone or an organization, please
note that here.)

Make checks payable to ATA/RTC and
and send to _____

Thank you for your support.
All donors will be listed on our website
(Please let us know if you prefer to be
anonymous.)

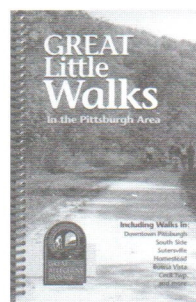
You can check the progress of this
important campaign at www.atatrail.org

**Gifts are tax-deductible and will be
matched \$2 for every \$1 through a
special challenge grant.**

TWO NEW TRAIL BOOKS OFFERED

GREAT LITTLE WALKS IN THE PITTSBURGH AREA

Great Little Walks in the Pittsburgh Area, by Yvonne Merrill, AE Richardson and Mary Shaw, is hot off the presses! This 64-page, spiral-bound, pocket-sized book features a dozen walks in and around the Pittsburgh area. Each walk merits a detailed description, amenities, access information and a map. Walks range in



length from 1.5 miles to 9.2 miles for persons of all abilities.

"I hope this book will encourage you to try some of our walks and enjoy the beauty of this region," says Merrill, a grandmother who has walked each one of the trails featured in the book and many others.

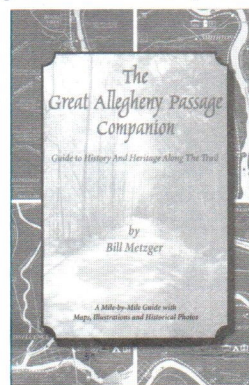
You can order this book from the ATA at 1-888-282-2453. It's \$7.95, plus \$1.00 shipping & handling.

GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE COMPANION

Trail users have an almost insatiable appetite for information - historic, geological, etc. - concerning the Great Allegheny Passage.

The Great Allegheny Passage Companion, Bill Metzger's mile-by-mile guide to the history and heritage along the trail from Pittsburgh to Cumberland, Md., answers just about every imaginable question and much more.

Bill is a lifelong railroad enthusiast and longtime bike tourist who became interested in trails, all trails but especially this trail, more than a decade ago.



He put forth the name Great Allegheny Passage, which, after much discussion, was adopted by all the trail groups in 2001. He brings his encyclopedic knowledge of the region, the railroads, and the trail to this warmly written work.

You'll like the detailed maps, the handy size, the Metzger prose, the historical illustrations and photographs. You can call toll-free 1-866-362-0789 to order the \$19.95 book and get a 20% ATA newsletter discount. Shipping and handling are extra.

The Fine Print

The **ATA Trail News** is produced and distributed by the **Allegheny Trail Alliance** for our friends and supporters and the members of our supporting organizations.

The **Allegheny Trail Alliance** is a coalition of seven trail-building organizations whose purpose is to assure the construction, maintenance and use of the multi-purpose trail from **Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD**, where the trail joins the **C&O Canal Towpath** to Washington, DC.

Officers of the Allegheny Trail Alliance

President	Linda McKenna Boxx	Vice President	Linc Van Sickle
Treasurer	Douglas Hoehn	Secretary	Bill Atkinson
Assistant Treasurer	Dennis Pfeiffer	Email	atamail@atatrail.org
	Newsletter Editor	Bill Metzger	

ALLEGHENY TRAIL ALLIANCE
419 COLLEGE AVE.
GREENSBURG, PA 15601



Non-Profit
Organization
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