

trail NEWS

WORKING TO CONNECT PITTSBURGH TO WASHINGTON, D.C.—THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS, NOT OVER THEM

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

and member organizations of the Allegheny Trail Alliance

Volume 7, Number 2

Summer 2007

Passage 1st in Trail Hall of Fame



National Honor Bestowed in Cumberland by RTC during Greenway Sojourn

The Great Allegheny Passage will always be first. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in Washington, D.C. made sure of that this summer by naming the Passage as the first trail in their national Rails-to-Trails Hall of Fame.

"The Great Allegheny Passage is a perfect example of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's vision for communities across the country," said Rails-to-Trails Conservancy President Keith Laughlin.

"Our trail system has been in development for 30 years. It's been an enormous effort of thousands of volunteers," said Linda McKenna Boxx, President of the Allegheny Trail Alliance. "The national recognition of their efforts is a fitting honor."

The presentation coincided with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's sixth annual Greenway Sojourn, an eight-day ride for 500 cyclists billed as "The Ride of a Lifetime." Sojourners gathered in Pittsburgh, rode the bus to Washington D.C., and rode the full length of the C&O Canal Towpath to Cumberland, MD where

(Please see "The Ride of a Lifetime," Page 3)

L-R: Maryland Department of Planning's Al Feldstein, Cumberland Mayor Lee Fiedler, Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association's Hank Parke, RTC's Tom Sexton, DCNR's Gary Smith, ATA President Linda McKenna Boxx, Regional Trail Corporation President Dexston Reed, Steel Valley Trail's Hannah Hardy, Allegheny Highlands Trail of MD's John Saylor, and Keith Laughlin, executive director of the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, who made the Hall of Fame presentation in Cumberland.

USS transfers Coke-Gas Line to ATA

A vital link in the completion of the last nine miles of the Great Allegheny Passage to Point State Park in Pittsburgh has been acquired.

United States Steel cleaned a former coke-gas pipeline in West Mifflin and Duquesne and transferred the 1.9 miles of property to the Regional Trail Corporation at substantially below market value.



From the left: Steel Valley Trail Council President Hannah Hardy, ATA President Linda McKenna Boxx, USS Chairman and CEO John Surma, and Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato

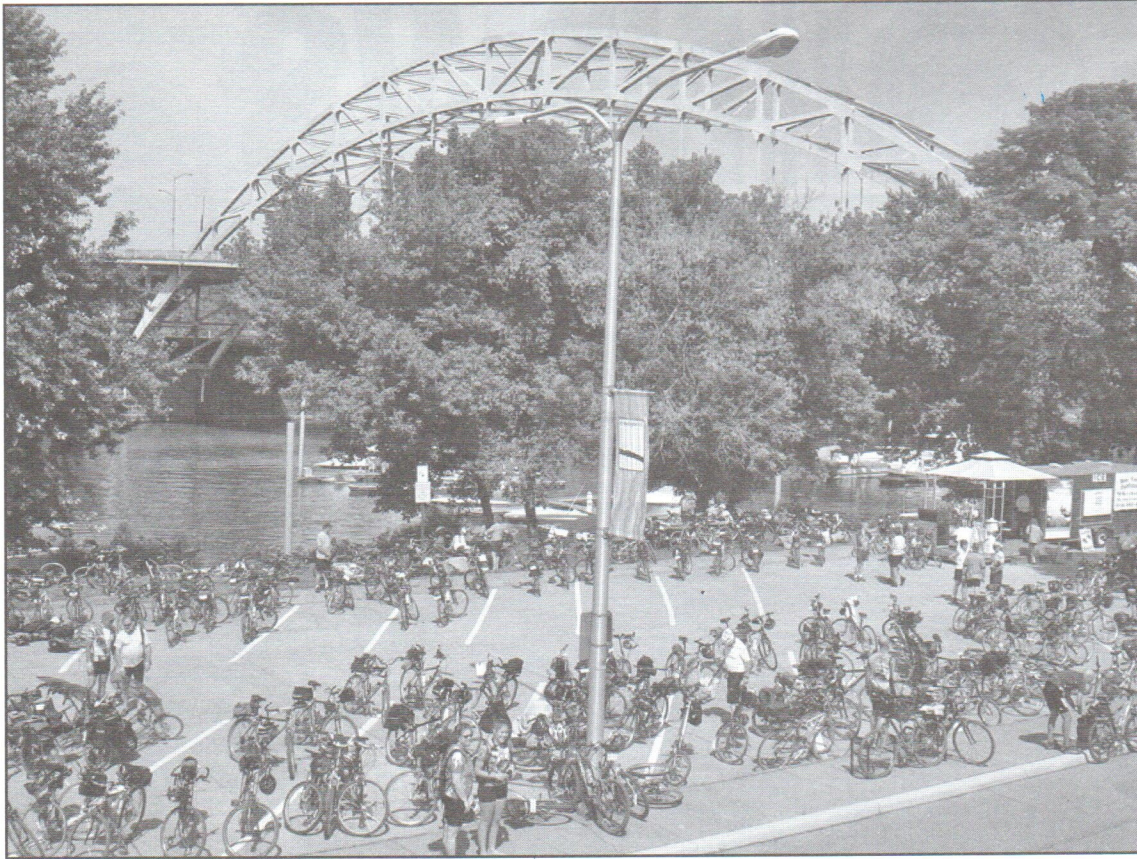
Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato and United States Steel (USS) Chairman & Chief Executive Officer John Surma announced the transfer in April.

"A year ago, John Surma and I agreed to co-chair the 'Closing the Gaps in the GAP' initiative," said Onorato.

"And now, thanks to U.S. Steel's efforts, a former brownfield site will be opened to the public *(Please see "Coke-Gas," Page 6)*

Inside

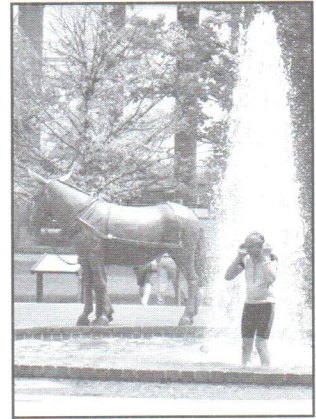
- Montour's Junction Function...6
- Join the Family.....7
- Letter from the President.....7
- Meet "The Voice" of ATA6
- 'Ride of a Lifetime'2-5



Parked at the Marina in McKeesport before pushing on to Pittsburgh, Day 8.



Beginning, Georgetown, Day 1.



End of the C&O Canal, Day 5.



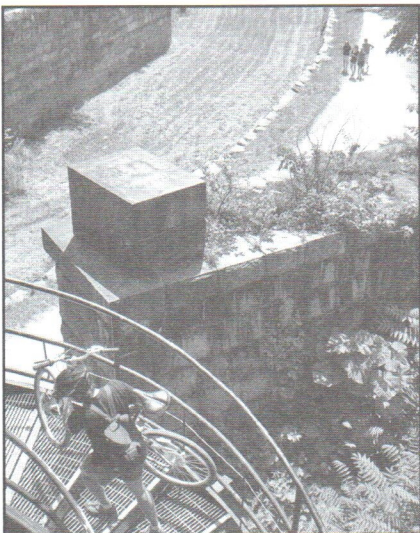
Great Falls of the Potomac, Day 1.



Funders Sojourn crosses the Potomac at White's Ferry.



Sojourner Bill Grun, 87, and friends.



Harper's Ferry, Day 2.



Rehashing the day's ride, Day 7.



Along the C&O at Great Falls Tavern, Day 1:



One of three camping areas at C



Bikes hosed off at Canal Place in Cumberland, Day 5.



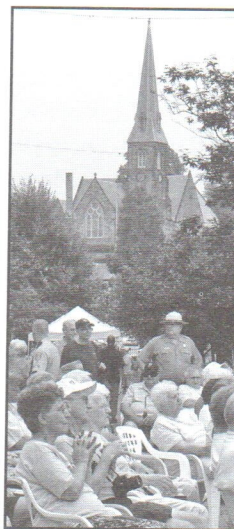
Bags loaded on final morning, Day 8.



Welcoming riders in Frostburg, Day 5.



Sojourners greeted with water and free ice cream in Rockwood, Day 6.



Cumberland, Day 5.



About to enter the 3,300-foot Big Savage Tunnel, Day 6.

Greenway 'The Ride o

(Continued from Page 1)

it joins with the Passage, then on to Pittsburgh, camping every night along the way.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is expected to add more first-year inductees on merits such as scenic value, high use, trail and trailside amenities, historical significance, excellence in management and maintenance of facility, and geographic distribution.

As part of the Cumberland festivities, ATA President Linda McKenna Boxx presented a symbol of the Passage's connection to the C&O Canal, officially connected last December, to Bob Hartman, representing the National Park Service, and the descendant of a canal worker.

"Getting this far was no small feat," Boxx said. "Volunteer based non-profit groups have been working at this for over 30

All photos cou



at Creek Park on the last night, Day 7.

sojourn 2007 for a Lifetime'

years. This moment is a credit to their spirited dedication.

"This connection was the driving vision, the goal that we were striving for through all the ups and downs of building this great trail system. We wanted to celebrate the connection in a grand way, and bringing 500 riders up through from DC was perfect," said Boxx. "Thank you to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for organizing this ambitious outing, and thanks to all you sojourners for being part of it.

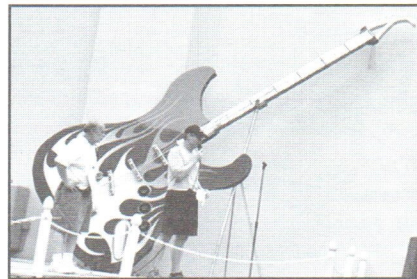
"Our trail is not complete yet," she said. "We are working hard to get everything finished by next year in time for the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Pittsburgh. We have nine miles to go and lots of challenges ahead.

"But the connection through the mountains, here to Cumberland, and on to D.C. is a huge accomplishment to celebrate, and thanks for being part of it."

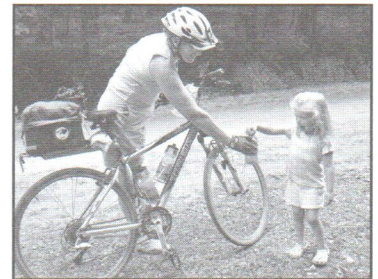
easy of TrailBook



Lunch in Meyersdale, Day 6.



RTC's Tom Sexton in Cumberland, Day 5.



Passing out water and a smile, Day 6.



Over the Youghiogheny River Gorge, Day 7.



Mechanic on duty at campsite.



At Ohiopyle Falls, Day 7.



Drying out at Cedar Creek from the rain in Confluence the night before, Day 7.



"You have to find just the right spot." Day 6.



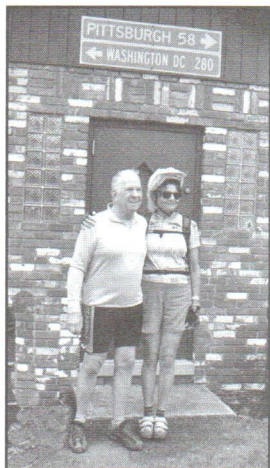
RTC staff weathering the storm.



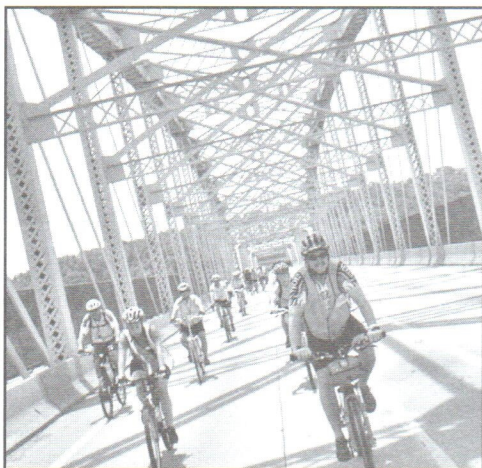
Massage tent flooded, Day 6.



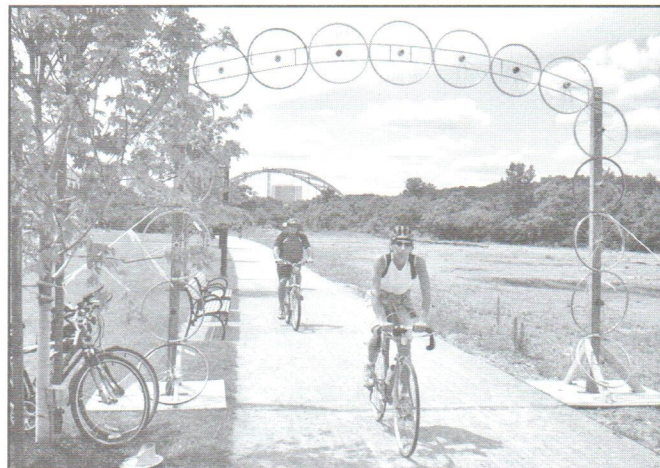
"Y-M-C-A!" Sojourners in celebratory mood at the Palisades in McKeesport, Day 8.



In Connellsville, Day 7.



Crossing the Duquesne Bridge, Day 8.



Final arch, Southside Works, downtown Pittsburgh in background, Day 8.

Montour, Panhandle trails celebrate conjunction

The crossing of the Montour and Panhandle trails now offers users a choice.

Celebrated in June at "The Function at the Junction," the final, 0.7-mile segment of the Montour-Panhandle trail connection in Mount Pleasant, on Noblestown Road, a mile west of McDonald, is complete, as is, less than a quarter-mile away, the six-mile Primrose-to-Joffre stretch of the Panhandle Trail, which now allows use of 26 miles of the eventual 29-mile trail from Collier nearly to Weirton, W.Va., and some 40 miles of the 47-mile Montour Trail from Moon to Clairton.

"You come to McDonald and you now have a choice," said Stan Sattinger, founding president and co-founder of the



Cutting the ribbon on new Panhandle section from Primrose to Joffre, are (L-R): Panhandle Trail Ass'n Kay Downey-Clarke, benefactor Frank Daily, Washington County Commissioner Bracken Burns, Congressman Tim Murphy, Washington County Commissioner Larry Maggi, (unknown), Washington County Tourism's Mark Tallarico, Washington County Commissioner Diana Irey, Montour's John Hooton, and Montour's Charlie Beaumariage. (Ned Williams photo)

Montour Trail Council. "At mile 18, you can now say, hmm, do I want to go east to Carnegie today, or do I want to go west to Weirton?"

Clog dancers and a rock band enlivened the event that also featured bike rides, trail walks, a petting zoo, face painters and a half-dozen food booths.

The organizers of the event demon-

strate the scope of the private-public partnerships in Allegheny and Washington counties. They include: The Fort Cherry Friends of the Montour Trail, the McDonald Area Redevelopment Association, the McDonald Borough Council, the Montour Trail Council, the Panhandle Trail Council, the Washington County

Board of Commissioners, and the Washington County Tourism Promotion Agency. Sponsors who helped to underwrite the event include Coca-Cola Bottling, Pepsi-Cola Roadhouse, Allied Waste Imperial Landfill, Alex E. Paris Contracting Co., Quicksilver Golf Club, Hi-View True Value Hardware, and Green's Taxi Service.

Voice of the ATA Hotline

Growing up in Maryland, just a few miles from the C&O Canal, Ann Nemanic is well-suited to serve as Trail Concierge for the Great Allegheny Passage.

From her Ligonier office at the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Ann fields telephone and e-mail inquiries on a daily basis. Knowledgeable and efficient, she answers and records all contacts as to subject, name, and residence (no small task with the increasing number of queries). Her contributions to the trail effort have proven invaluable.

Prior to joining the LHV team, Ann had 14 years in the hospitality industry as Director of Sales & Marketing for one of the Laurel Highlands' premiere facilities, Mountain View Inn. During that time she served on the LHV Board of Directors, two years as chair of the board. Ann currently serves on the board for Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce and as a trustee for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Sign Trust. As Tourism Services Manager for LHV she works with membership development, retention and hospitality training.

Ann lives in Greensburg with her husband Joe, daughter Hannah, and puppy Cooper - all avid fans of the trail!



Ann Nemanic

TrailBook

Coke-Gas Line Transferred

(Continued from Page 1)

for recreational use."

USS has become an important supporter of the Passage's completion. In cleaning the former coke-gas pipeline property, USS removed an obsolete double-stacked pipeline and cleaned up the corridor. For this effort USS received the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award in the business category. The \$5,000 award was donated to the ATA.

"United States Steel Corporation and its employees place a high value on the ideal of good corporate citizenship, and we're proud to be a partner in a project that will have numerous benefits for the region we've called home for more than 105 years," said Surma.

"We look forward to partnering with Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato and the Allegheny Trail Alliance in the effort to bridge the remaining gaps in the Passage."

Completion of the Great Allegheny Passage is a signature project of the Pittsburgh 250 Commission to celebrate the region's 250th Anniversary in 2008.

"Allegheny County is taking a real leadership role," said Steel Valley Trail Council President Hannah Hardy.

"We can move quickly into design and construction, and we hope to make progress on several sections of what we call 'the gaps in the GAP' this year. Without the commitment and focus of Dan Onorato and the leadership of John Surma, we could not possibly achieve this in time for the 250th."

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Map has new look thanks to National Park Service

Our map brochure has a brand new look, thanks to a team that included staff of the National Park Service. With financial assistance from the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office, we were able to use the expertise at the NPS Interpretive Design Center in Harpers Ferry to redesign this important publication in a style reflecting high-quality NPS standards.

The most dramatic difference is that the map now shows the topography that the trail passes through. The ruggedness of the ancient mountains flanking the Eastern Continental Divide shows why building a canal past Cumberland proved to be impractical.

Grade Not as Daunting as It Appears

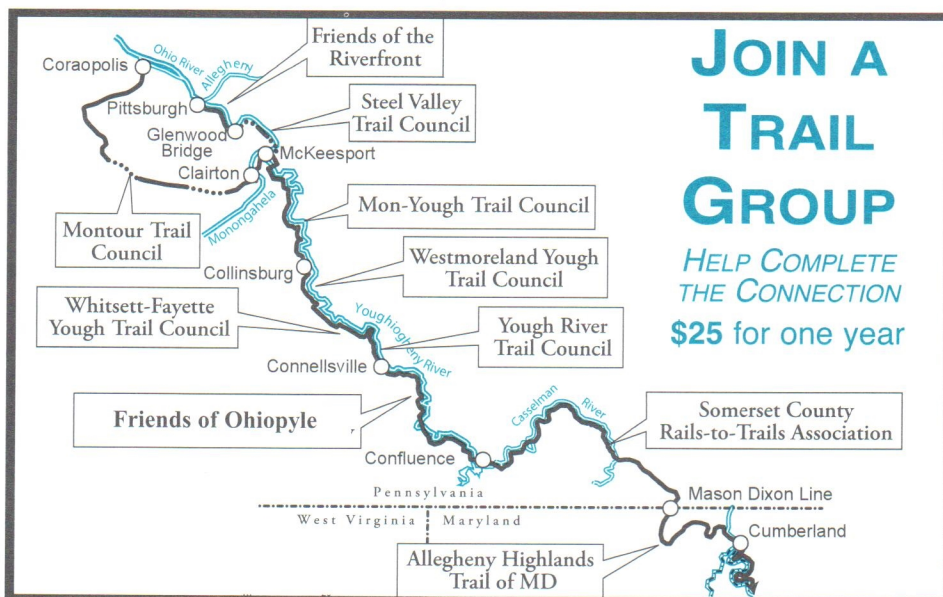
We hope the map helps our trail users understand the elevation table we show on our website. The trail does make a good climb from Cumberland, but it is not as daunting as the chart appears. Even as it meanders through the Alleghenies, a gentle grade is maintained. When we say nearly level, we mean it!

The eastbound rise, or grade, from Pittsburgh to the Eastern Continental Divide near Deal averages 0.25% over 126 miles, with the steepest section the last 10 miles from Meyersdale to the Divide, averaging 0.65%. To relate to a 0.25% change in elevation, it is *equivalent to the rise of one stair step over nearly the length of a football field.*

The westbound grade is steeper, but still gentle. Trains hauling heavy freight loads did it, so can you! The westbound climb over the 24 miles from Cumberland to the Divide averages 1.44%. That is one stair step every 45 feet. The steepest section is between Cumberland and Frostburg and rises 1.5% over those 15 miles. That climb can also be accomplished by buying a ticket for the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and letting the train give you a lift.

Look for the new map along the trail or contact us at atamail@atatrail.org and we'll be glad to send you one.

—Linda McKenna Boxx



We invite you to become a trail group member and volunteer.

\$25 for one year.

Includes trail group newsletter, ATA newsletter, and Great Allegheny Passage donor tag.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

☐ I'd like to support the Passage! Please make your check/money order payable to RTC/ATA for a **general donation**.

☐ Enclosed please find my \$25 check or money order made payable to the trail group for my membership in the _____
(please fill in your choice: see map above)

Please mail to ATA, P.O. Box 501, Latrobe, PA 15650

PASSAGES

Butterfly Alley

In late summer the green world achieves stasis, a calm that comes with maturity. We feel it, too, a sense of completion born of fruition.

These are the days of ripe fields, goldenrod opening with the beginning of August, Joe-Pye weed tall and at its mauve peak, ironweed showing purple, and asters about to burst forth in their pale blue constellations. And in the open stretches along the Passage, we ride through a conservancy of butterflies.

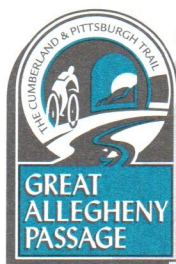
One such area is the relatively sun-struck trail east of Meyersdale from Warrens Mill Road to the Continental Divide, about a two-mile stretch that has come to be known as Butterfly Alley.

The blooms of what some call weeds attract them. This is one good argument against mowing any more than necessary.

Here this time of year you will find monarchs and tiger swallowtails (the males are big, yellow and black, and the females smaller, blue and black) in abundance. And that's just the beginning. Stop awhile with a field guide, and your list will quickly grow.

As always, nature reveals itself when we are still.

—Jeff O'Brien, editor

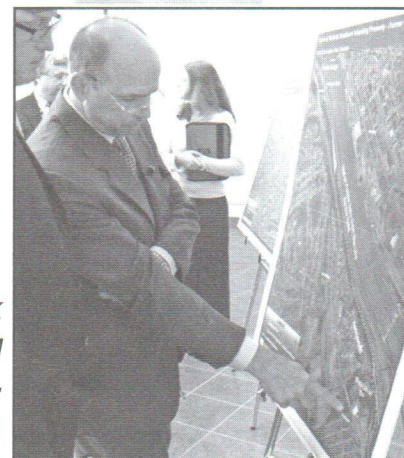


Historic bridge in place
near Meyersdale and
soon open: See below.



**500 Sojourners
Cut Loose in
McKeesport:
See Photo Spread
Pages 2-5**

**Key Link
Transferred
to ATA:
See Page 1**



ATA Trail News

Summer 2007

Historic Bollman Bridge in place; Deck finished soon

The Bollman Bridge, a 30-ton cast and wrought iron truss bridge serving the Passage in southern Somerset County, was lifted into place in July and should be open to trail users by September.

Two cranes lifted the span into place on July 18. The 24-foot-high, 100-foot-long bridge last year was moved from its former site, about two miles northwest of Meyersdale. It was disassembled because it couldn't be transported in one piece to its new location about two miles southeast of Meyersdale. It was reassembled on the trail near the pile-driven abutments that now support it over Scratch Hill Road.

The bridge was built in 1871 by a construction company owned by Wendell Bollman. It carried B&O Railroad traffic over Wills Creek in Hyndman, Bedford County. It was moved to the Meyersdale area in 1896 to serve road and farm traffic over what are now CSX and Amtrak railroad tracks. When PennDOT notified the Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association that the well-preserved bridge

was to be demolished, the association and the Allegheny Trail Alliance worked hard to save it.

"It was well worth it," said Linda McKenna Boxx, president of the Allegheny Trail Alliance. "It's a beautiful bridge, and it fits perfectly here."

The bridge will eliminate a bumpy dirt, gravel and rock detour down to, across and up from Scratch Hill Road. Overshadowed at its old site by the nearby 1,908-foot-long Salisbury Viaduct, the bridge once again finds itself with a bigger neighbor. It's about a quarter-mile from the imposing Keystone Viaduct, a 910-foot-long span with a curved concrete deck that sits about 100 feet above Flaugherly Creek.

(Thanks to Larry Walsh of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)



The Bollman Bridge is placed over Scratch Hill Road, about Mile 30.3, near Meyersdale in Somerset County.

ATA Trail News © Summer 2007

Trail News is published two times a year by the Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA). The ATA is a coalition of the seven trail-building organizations whose purpose is to assure the construction, maintenance and use of the multiple purpose, non-motorized trail from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD where it joins the C & O Canal Towpath to Washington, DC. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact ATA:

Phone: 888-ATA-BIKE

atamail@atatrail.org

www.atatrail.org