

TRAIL TRACKINGS

A Newsletter for Members of the Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association
The Best 42 Miles on the Great Allegheny Passage!

Vol. 4, No. 1

Spring 2007



Spring Begins on the Great Allegheny Passage with the Opening of the Doors of the Big Savage Tunnel!

Bollman Bridge Moved to Trail at Scratch Hill

With much planning and coordinating, the long-awaited move of the Bollman Bridge was completed in April. Work on the abutments to hold the bridge was started May 7 by Frank M. Sheesly Co. When done, the bridge will be lifted in place and refurbished with a new deck and railing.



Bollman Bridge shown resting on trail waiting to span Scratch Hill Road while crane drives piles for bridge abutments.

Trail Calendar

June 2, River and Wind Challenge, see article inside or call 814-445-9232.

June 23 – 30, Greenway Sojourn, from DC to Pittsburgh, to register visit www.atatrail.org, click on link.

July 4 – 7, 2007, Rockwood Sesquicentennial, at Rockwood community grove, for info visit www.rockwood150.com.

Tunnel Opened April 4th

A number of volunteers and board members showed up this year to help open the tunnel. The tunnel doors are closed every winter to protect it from the elements and vandalism and also protect the millions of dollars that were invested to bring it back to a usable condition. Everything was intact except for seven ballasts and one bulb that needed replaced in the overhead lighting. The doors, as noted in a past issue, were custom made to fit the openings and to swing inward. Because of that, it can be a bit of a project to open them especially if the winter weather rusted the top latches. Then a

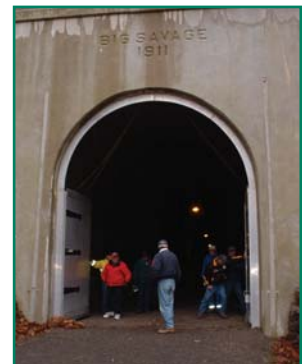


Workers must first enter through the small access door to get to the latches.

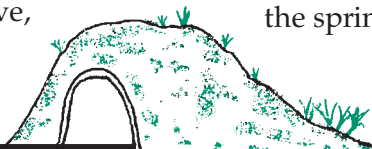


After the latches are freed the top sections are lowered with the attached ropes and folded behind the main doors.

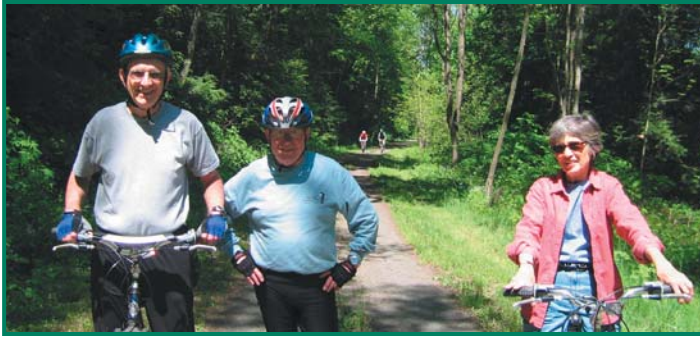
person needs to climb to the top of the doors to loosen them. Shown are some photos from the spring '06 opening.



The main doors are now swung inside for the summer. Bring on the bikes!



Avid Trail User, Supporter and SCRTA Board Member Passes Away



Fred Shaffer riding the trail with friends Bob Holt and Carol Famariss.

The Great Allegheny Passage recently lost a dedicated friend when Fred R. Shaffer died on February 24, 2007. Fred had served as a SCRTA board member for 6 years and helped the trail progress through many of its early developments. Fred was an avid bicycle rider who had done the RAGBRAI (ride across Iowa) with his family several times; he had ridden the Seagull Century, and the ride through the 5 boroughs of New York City.

He had also biked in France, Germany, and Holland. But, his favorite place of all to ride was the Great Allegheny Passage. He will be greatly missed by his fellow board members and his biking buddies.



Fred cross country skiing on the trail.

For his funeral the family asked that in lieu of flowers, a memorial donation may be made to the Somerset County Rails to Trails Assoc. in Fred's memory. So far over \$7,000 has been donated. The proceeds will be used to erect a pavilion at the popular Deal Trailhead and other projects. We'll keep you posted. Memorials in Fred's memory may still be sent to SCRTA, Box 413, Somerset, PA 15501.

24-HOUR TRAIL CARE SERVICE

The Trail Care Voice Message Service, established by the Somerset County Parks and Recreation Board, is for trail users on the Somerset County section of the Great Allegheny Passage. With this service trail users can help maintain the trail by reporting maintenance-related problems.

*The Trail Care Voice Message Number is
814-445-1573*

"For Emergencies Please Call 911"

B & B Along the Trail RiveRest Bed and Breakfast, Ursina, PA

"Let Time Flow By... Cares Float Away..." These words are more than RiveRest Bed and Breakfast's slogan; they are the feeling owners Dave and Carol Kemp want their guests to share while they are visiting the four bedroom bed and breakfast in Ursina.



The late 1800's vintage home, built by Carol's great-great grandfather, Jacob Rush, features a large, wrap-around porch overlooking the Laurel Hill Creek. There, guests eat breakfast, read, play board games, watch the ducks on the river, or just relax after a busy day of biking on the Great Allegheny Passage, rafting or kayaking on the Youghiogheny River, visiting Fallingwater, or touring the area's many historic and scenic sites.

Located just two miles from the Confluence trailhead and one mile from the Harnedsville trail parking area, RiveRest provides easy access for cyclists traveling on the Great Allegheny Passage. Secure shelter for bicycles is provided.

For those guests who are interested in the sites, services and history of the area, Dave and Carol have lifelong ties to Somerset County and the Turkeyfoot Valley area. They are eager to share their knowledge to assist guests in having a pleasurable and memorable visit.

Visitors have often commented that staying at RiveRest Bed and Breakfast is like a trip to grandma's house. Kemps' pride themselves in providing a warm, comfortable and informal atmosphere for individuals and groups alike. To learn more about RiveRest and its accommodations, log on to www.riverest.com.

NEWS

Annual Spring Trail Clean-up

This year's clean-up was hugely successful, reported Trail Coordinator, Brett Hollern. Help came from Meyersdale High School, various scout troops, the newly-formed trail adoption volunteers and other trail volunteers. The Somerset County Probation Dept. Community Service Program also participated and will be taking the nearly 300 tires that were removed from the trail for recycling. The Sand Patch and Deal areas were intensely covered. Where does all the debris come from! The Sand Patch area was a former illegal dump, a large roll-off container was filled to the max and about 200 tires collected. At Deal, another roll-off was nearly filled and about 100 tires collected. A large amount of scrap metal was collected that didn't go into the dumpsters but was taken by collectors for recycling. If you see or know of any illegal dumping along the trail, please call the Trail Care Voice Message Service at 814-445-1573.



Volunteers from the Meyersdale Area with a mound of debris collected from their adopted trail section at the spring clean-up.

Adopt-a-Trail Program A Success!

An article in our last issue outlined the plans for the Adopt-a-Trail program. The word was put out and a signup form was published. The response was outstanding. 15 of the 16 sections of the trail that were sectioned off for adoption by clean-up groups had been assigned by May 1. The participation of these adopting groups helped immensely in the annual spring trail clean-up. A plan is in the works to erect signs at the various adopted sections to give recognition to these volunteer groups. If you want info on trail clean-up policies or want your name on the list if a section becomes available, call the Trail Care Voice Message Service at 814-445-1573.

Trail Connection Ceremony

An event is planned to celebrate the connection of Pennsylvania and Maryland on the Great Allegheny Passage and the connection of the Passage to the C&O Canal in Cumberland on June 27 at 4pm (time subject to change).

The ceremony is to coincide with the Rails-to-Trails Sojourn arriving in Cumberland that day. Also in the planning



Riding a section of the connection to Cumberland.



Area at Canal Place where Milepost 0 marker will be placed.

stages for this event, is the desire to install a plaque/marker to denote milepost zero of the Great Allegheny Passage at Canal Place in Cumberland.

River and Wind Challenge

Bicycling Adventure For extreme cyclists!

The Salvation Army of Somerset County will hold a unique Bike Tour called the "River & Wind Challenge" that will take place on Saturday June 2, 2007. This community event is open to all, according to Marilyn Albright, Somerset Service Center Director.

The Salvation Army feels very blessed to have such wonderful sponsors such as Rte 31 Board and Ski who donate time as well as a fantastic Grand Prize: a brand new shiny women's Trek hybrid trail bike!! Route 31 Bike, Board & Ski donate their time. They will be there with River and Wind Challenge participants to provide support if anyone needs a flat fixed while participating in the event. They arrive when we do, bright and early at 8:00 am at Confluence for the 60 milers. Rte 31 Board & Ski friendly staff will be there to check air, pump up if needed and do any minor adjusting needed. Other local businesses have donated prizes for the random door prizes. An anonymous contributor donated another bicycle: a brand new shiny red Mongoose! That makes 2 Grand Prize Bicycles, one bike for men, one bike for women. This event provides us with an opportunity to share a day with our friends and neighbors. It is not too late to register if you are passionate about bicycling.

Registration forms for the event are available by contacting: Marilyn Albright, (814) 445-9232 via phone or by email: marilyn_albright@use.salvationarmy.org, Salvation Army, 140 East Fairview Street, PO Box 446, Somerset, PA 15501.

Donation for Portajohn

A donation has been made to SCRТА for the express purpose of installing a portajohn at the south end of the Big Savage Tunnel. This area at the south end is a great section to visit with its' fabulous views of the Cumberland cliffs. It's a very popular destination and turn-a-round point, a great place to take a break. It gets a lot of traffic from both the MD and PA sides of the trail. A pottie here will be a great addition to the trail. The donation was made by long time trail supporters and users who have wrote numerous books and articles on trails, Mary Shaw and Roy Weil.



A view through the trees at the south end of the Big Savage Tunnel.

Membership Update Annual Membership Drive

As of March 1, 2007 we have 306 active members. That means we gained about 50 members last year. That is Great! There were 86 members who had not rejoined. We still need help, so if you know of anyone who would like to join or you're one of the 86 who need to rejoin, please see the membership material enclosed. If you do not rejoin, this will be your last newsletter and the trail will greatly miss your help.

SCRТА Web Site

A web site, still in work but running, has been created for the Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Assoc. It's a site for your use and enjoyment and anyone searching the web for biking opportunities in Somerset County on the Great Allegheny Passage. There are e-mail links for messages to membership, trail care, newsletter submissions and the web master. There is a membership sign-up page for new or renewing members which should make it helpful in attracting more members. As of present, we cannot accept payment on line but will enable that feature shortly. Just sign-up there and mail a check. If you have not renewed your membership for this year, fill free to give it a try.

Trailhead News: MEYERSDALE

Historical Exhibit Opens

The restored Western Maryland Railway Station in Meyersdale, under the auspices of Meyersdale Area Historical Society, now boasts a three-room interactive exhibit featuring aspects of life in southern Somerset County.

The station's entry hall features an overhead display of signs modeled upon original W.M.D. depot signs, as well as two simulated rail cars, a coach and a business car. The cars' windows provide visitors with views of the interior of each car and historical rail scenes.

The Industrial Heritage Room offers artifacts and photographs from the area's rail and mining history. Overhead, an S-scale model train runs through facsimiles of the Salisbury Viaduct and the Big Savage Tunnel.

Antique farm and manufacturing momentos and photographs

are displayed within the framework of a beautiful scale barn structure in the Agricultural Heritage Room. Adjoining this room, a newly-refurbished and restocked gift shop awaits visitors.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place at 10 a.m., May 26. Offering access to the Great Allegheny Passage and parking for visitors, the station is open on Saturdays and Sundays, May through October. The exhibit is free and open to the public.



Meyersdale Station and Caboose with Great Allegheny Passage showing at lower left.