

# TRAIL TRACKINGS

A Newsletter for Members of the Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association

Vol. 5, No. 2

"The High Point of the Great Allegheny Passage"

Summer 2008



## ONE MORE BRIDGE TO CROSS

### Dedication of the Riverton Bridge, McKeesport, PA, 25 September 2008

A highlight of the Great Allegheny Passage is the bridges.

Executive of Allegheny County, Dan Onorato and Chief Executive Officer of U.S. Steel, John Surma cut the ribbon on the ramp leading up to the bridge. The span crosses the river



Linda McKenna Boxx speaking at the Dedication of the Riverton Bridge. In the foreground are Dan Onorato, seated right, and John Surma to his left. The bridge is in the background.

Somerset County has the lion's share with four over the Casselman River and two major viaducts. Riders traversing the length of the Passage have commented that the Salisbury Viaduct is one of, if not the, most exciting part of the trip.

However, the spotlight on the 25th of September 2008 was McKeesport, PA in Allegheny County close to the terminus of the Great Allegheny Passage at the Point in Pittsburgh. As a part of the push to close the Gaps in the GAP, the Riverton Bridge over the Monongahela River was ceremonially opened that morning.

A gathering of dignitaries including the Chief

just downstream of the confluence of the Youghiogheny River with the Monongahela and connects McKeesport to Duquesne, PA. Trails leading to and from the bridge are in the process of being completed.

The bridge was donated to Allegheny County by U.S. Steel. This is the last bridge to be converted for use by cyclists along the 150 plus mile length of the Great Allegheny Passage. Last fall the Hot Metal Bridge, also crossing the Mon River within sight of downtown Pittsburgh was opened for bike and pedestrian traffic.

- Paul g Wiegman



## B & B Along the Trail

### The Gingerbread House Bed & Breakfast



Located at the Rockwood Trailhead on the Great Allegheny Passage, the Gingerbread House Bed & Breakfast, a lovely restored 1903 Victorian home with a wrap-around porch, is just a short drive to Ohiopyle, Falling water, Seven Springs Mountain Resort and Hidden Valley Ski Resort.

Accommodations include five guest rooms, each room charming and individually decorated in a country style. The Innkeeper resides close by to assure a comfortable yet private stay. A full breakfast such as blueberry French toast, sausage, juice and fresh fruit in season is served each morning. Afternoon tea and home-baked cookies are offered upon arrival.

Check-in time: 3:00pm  
Check-out time: 11:00am

**The Gingerbread House  
Bed & Breakfast**  
156 Rockdale Road  
Rockwood, PA 15557  
(814) 926-2542



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

## Trail Calendar

**Oct. 25:** Cumberland Arts Walk. 5--8 p.m.  
[www.times-news.com](http://www.times-news.com)

**Nov. 28:** Cumberland. Tree Lighting Ceremony.  
[www.canalplace.org](http://www.canalplace.org)

**Nov. 29-30:** Meyersdale. A Maple City Christmas.  
[www.meyersdale.org](http://www.meyersdale.org)

**Dec. 5-6:** West Newton. Holiday Concert.  
[www.towncenter/info/downtown/trail-towns](http://www.towncenter/info/downtown/trail-towns)

**Dec. 6:** Frostburg. Storybook Holiday.  
[www.mdmountaininside.com](http://www.mdmountaininside.com)

## CONFLUENCE — THE TRAIL'S MOST LAID BACK TOWN

Riding down the trail toward Ohiopyle early one evening, neighbor and friend Polly Rose commented, "You know, I bet we have more recumbents per capita in Confluence than any town on the trail." None of us would take the bet. After all, of the six people riding in our little group, only one was on an old-fashioned uncomfortable upright bike!

Much of the credit for the relaxed revolution goes to Jay and Wendy Duchene, whose Allegheny Recumbent Tours ([www.alleghenyrecumbenttours.com](http://www.alleghenyrecumbenttours.com)) brought a fleet of 20 of Sun's EZ Sports to Confluence in 2005. Jay was a long-time 'bent rider, way ahead of his time on his classic Easy Racer long wheelbase

cruiser. When the Duchenes bought their little house on Confluence's west side, the next logical step for Jay and Wendy was a bike rental business designed to bring trail users a different, laid back perspective. Hubby Bill and I had a couple of Suns in our garage already for in-town errands, he an EZ-3 trike and me an EZ-1 that made a perfect introduction to the idea of being 'bent. Once I saw ART's EZ-Sport, though, I snapped one up on "long term loan," and with Bill (who rides a hand-powered recumbent trike) took two tours in Canada.

Truth is, once you try a recumbent it's hard to imagine going back to a "diamond frame" upright. The comfort factor alone makes them ideal trail bikes. And when you add in the Zen factor, they're unbeatable. After all, if you could ride along and casually watch the passing scenery instead of staring at the trail surface six feet in front of you, wouldn't that uphill grade along the Casselman River be a lot more pleasant?

For a town the size of Confluence (population about 825), the sheer variety of 'bents on parade is an amazement. We're practically a recumbent encyclopedia! There are several EZ Sports, of course, thanks in part to a reduction in the ART inventory in the fall of 2006. Long-time resident Peg Seidel rides a funky Burley Canto she bought from Korber's Cycles (now West Newton Bicycle Shop). Since "retiring," former Confluence Hardware owner Ray Silbaugh has a short wheelbase recumbent, perfect for tossing in the back of the motorhome, at the instigation of Bill and Nancy Somers who first brought these sporty 'bents to the neighborhood.

Then there are the trikes. A "tadpole trike" with two wheels in the front and one in back (as opposed to a one-wheel in front



and two in back “delta” trike like Bill’s handcycle) is favored by my fellow SCRTA Board member Paul Wiegman and his wife Pam (the better to sneak up on trailside wildflowers) and West-Sider Dave Marschik.

And me? You’ll find me happily cruising along on my RANS Stratus XP beauty. It’s sleek and it’s fast. Oh, and it’s really comfortable.

--Pam Metzger



Confluence's 'bent parade' at the Yough River bridge along the trail near Confluence.

## Excerpts from Mike Langley's Blog of the Great Allegheny Passage

Between September 27 and October 4, Allegheny Conference on Community Development CEO, Mike Langley was among 87 cyclists pedaling from Washington, DC to downtown Pittsburgh along the C&O Canal Towpath and the Great Allegheny Passage. The 335 mile hiking and biking trail connecting the Pittsburgh region to the nation's capital is arguably the most accessible great trail experience in the world. For more than a decade, the Allegheny Trail Alliance has worked to turn old rail paths that follow George Washington's original route to southwestern Pennsylvania into the Great Allegheny Passage. Completing the trail is a signature project of the Pittsburgh 250, and the weeklong Venture Outdoors 250 Bike Tour is a celebration of that effort. As he made his way to Pittsburgh along the trail, Mike blogged about the ride on the Pittsburgh Business Times Web Site. Read it all at <http://pittsburgh.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/stories/2008/09/daily55.html> (search for Mike Langley blogs).

<The trail then winds through Meyersdale (with its beautifully remodeled train depot that serves as a museum and a great stopover for the biking crowd), Garrett, Rockwood and finally today to Confluence.>

<This stretch of the Great Allegheny Passage has to be some of the most breathtaking scenery on the entire route – and anywhere in the country, for that matter. With the recent cool temperatures, the fall foliage was approaching peak in the mountains today.>

## A Triple Win!

Looking for an unusual but meaningful gift for that special someone at birthday and holiday times? Here's an idea. Honor your recipient by making a donation to Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association in his or her name, and create a win-win-win situation!

**Win # 1:** You will be honoring your friend or family member in a unique, meaningful way, especially if that person loves the trail as much as you do!

**Win # 2:** Your gift will help to further develop the trail and retain its reputation as a beautiful, enjoyable resource!

**Win # 3:** Your donation will spare you the time, gasoline and possible frustration of shopping while giving you the satisfaction of knowing your gift is a very beneficial one!

Simply write a check to SCRTA, mark it “in honor of [Person’s Name]” and mail to SCRTA, P.O. Box 413, Somerset, PA 15501. If you would like SCRTA to send notification of your gift to the honoree, be sure to include that person’s mailing address.

*A triple win—what a great gift idea!*

## A Note About Your Membership...

If you have recently joined or rejoined the Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association, you should have received your new membership card within the last few weeks.

Renewal invoices are mailed out each May for the upcoming year. Anyone rejoining the Association will receive a thank you card with a new membership card attached, along with a member sticker. New members will also receive these items after joining.

Because the Association recently redesigned parts of the membership card and sticker, the cards are a bit late in being mailed out. At this time all cards have been mailed to those who have joined or rejoined the Association since May 2008. Anyone with a Lifetime membership should have also received a new card this year. If you did not receive your updated membership card and feel you should have, please contact me at the email or phone number listed below. I will check your membership information and get back to you.

The membership year runs from May 1st to April 30th each year. If you have an annual membership, you will be invoiced annually and receive a new card each year once you rejoin. Anyone joining for multiple years will be invoiced as their membership expires and will receive a new card once rejoining. Lifetime members will periodically be sent new cards to replace old ones.

I hope this helps to clear up some of the questions concerning membership in the Association. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sandy Berkebile, Membership Administrator  
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## Somerset County Rails-to-Trails Association

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Somerset, PA 15501

www.bikesomersetcountypa.com

Address Service Requested



A Member  
of the  
Allegheny  
Trail  
Alliance



## Happy 100th Birthday Maynard

Our trail ambassador extraordinaire, Maynard Sembower, age 99 (soon to be 100!) volunteers most of his time, except in the winter months

when he vacations in Florida, in his little office at the Rockwood trailhead visitor center.

The office is packed with shirts for sale and Maynard is a wealth of information

about the trail and the railroad that used to run over it.

Maynard knows a lot about both. As a young man he had the privilege to see the first Western Maryland train that ran over the section of tracks that our trail now follows. He also witnessed the last trains to pass over the now removed tracks. Maynard was also there to lend a hand when the trail was started and was working at the visitor center when it was completed. It was just natural for him to volunteer to man the visitor center at the Rockwood trailhead.



Maynard receives sign from Linda McKenna Boxx at the Somerset County Trail Dedication, May 2006. Jim Clay at right, a relative of Maynard, also a dedicated trail volunteer passed away last year.

He talks to dozens of trail visitors every weekend, including people from all parts of the country and other countries as well. He gives information, directions, advice and if they're interested, he sells them a shirt or two.

We've talked to people from all parts of the country and one thing they all remember about their trip down the trail is that wonderful young-looking man at the Rockwood trailhead.

Maynard became ill at the end of this summer so you may not find him at his post quite as regularly. If you like, send him a card in care of the above SCRTA address. Be sure to send one for his birthday also, 100 years young, December 24.

Maynard, we wish you a very *"Happy Birthday"* and a big *"Thank You"* for all the time, and hard work you have given for the good of the trail over the years.



Maynard's booth at the Rockwood trailhead.