



WESTMORELAND CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

www.westmorelandconservancy.org

October 2006 Editor: Shelly Tichy (724) 325-5523 newsletter@westmorelandconservancy.org

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Autumn 2006 Photo Outings

Linn Run,



Friday, October 13th

Fall colors, reflections of the Autumn foliage in the water, brisk, windblown leaves. The band of crazy photographers inducted a new member on the Linn Run outing October 13th.

Mary Paulone Carns joined us on our all-day adventure, which was rather tame by previous standards (no one went into the frigid water this year!). After an exhilarating day (did I mention BRISK??) we followed Cary Bohl's directions and had a late lunch at the Green Gables Restaurant in Jennerstown. What a spot! Quite a memorable day!



Pleasant Valley Park, Sunday, October 15th.

Next stop was here in our own Murrysville. We walked the new trails in Pleasant Valley Park with Douglas Granger in attendance! We thoroughly enjoy seeing new faces in our midst! The weather was a bit warmer, not so breezy and we had great views of the surrounding terrain.



The trails meander around ravines and fields and

through wooded areas, revealing lovely old fence posts, fungi and assorted growth.

Our last scheduled destination was **The Eliza Furnace / Ghost Town Trail** on **Monday, October 16th**. While en route our group decided to stop at Buttermilk Falls first, since it would come up before we reached the turn for the Ghost Town Trail. What a spectacular area! Cary & I had to climb all the way down to play around the



falls, like any other juvenile delinquents! That's where Dick Byers joined us. We then decided he might be part mountain goat as he led us around the ruined foundations of the old McFeeley property (Mr. Roger's Grandparents) and the surrounding hills. He explained differences between various ferns and how to identify some trees in their dormant state, too. Then we got in our cars and followed Dick out to the Eliza Furnace. That is one big piece of history! A few twists down the road the Laurel Furnace is a bit older (1825-1849) and a bit less intact. We discussed going on to State Game Lands to see the Baldwin Furnace, but none of our group came prepared with blaze orange and it was hunting season.



Two additional photo walks were added at spur-of-the-moment. Dick, Cary and Doug managed an outing to see the Baldwin Furnace about a week later. October 30th presented a lovely morning for Richard, Cary and Doug to walk at Harrison Hills Park and photograph the sugar maples hanging on to the last remnants of color.



Photo Shoot Outings

This quarter we have scheduled a few excursion dates: **Sunday, January 28th at Buttermilk Falls**. We'll meet at the Murrysville Panera Bread at 7:45 AM. A walk is also scheduled for **Sunday, February 4th at Pleasant Valley Park** at 1 PM. And we'll meet for an outing at Phipps Conservatory on **Sunday, March 4th**. If you are interested in joining us for one of our adventures, call Shelly at 724-325-5523 or e-mail us at: contact@westmorelandconservancy.org

In Memory of Hank Kendall



The greatest and most sincere compliment that I reserve for some individuals has always been a phrase similar to "I like working with you." With Hank, it was

“I really, really like working with you.

Give Hank a project and it would be done. He was knowledgeable, persevering, undaunted by obstacles, down to Earth, friendly and surprisingly easy to work with.

Hank, your presence is going to be sorely missed.

Mount Fitzpatrick

Hank Kendall left us on Monday, December 11th, 2006. His memorial service was Wednesday, December 13th. He and his wife Joanne were stewards of the Tomer Reserve on Twin Oaks. Together they would maintain the trails and keep the parking area free of refuse, Hank kept the area mowed and neat. Frank and Trish Muzika, good friends of the Kendalls, visited the Tomer Reserve on Friday, December 15th. As they were walking through the reserve a large snowy owl appeared over the reserve. They told Joanne that they knew it was Hank and that he is at peace. Frank and Trish would like to join Joanne as stewards of the Tomer Reserve.



Related by Joanne Kendall



Through this Conservancy I have had the opportunity to meet, work with and become friends with some amazing, talented people. Hank was one of those people. I have known only a few that seemed so in tune with Nature and the world around us. He was an avid hunter and fisherman, very aware of the balance that needs to be observed and the respect Nature deserves.

Hank & Joanne were among the very first members of the Westmoreland Conservancy back when the Kellman property was acquired. Together with the Dunbars, the Shirlands and other local residents they helped to shape Friends of Rural Murrysville (F.O.R.M.) in the mid-90s in an effort to establish Green and Rural PRD standards, ensuring responsible development practices. They became more active in the Westmoreland Conservancy when Hank retired. He and Joanne had attended many of the the Conservancy functions and so we had a passing acquaintance. That is until the day he volunteered Joanne (in her absence) to work on one of my committees. He seemed to delight in this action, performing it with his impish smile.



He also became heavily involved in the effort to save Pleasant Valley Park, meeting with the Municipality of Murrysville as well as PENDOT to design a driveway and parking area meeting all defined standards. It was his intent that this would provide safe entrance for the public to enjoy Pleasant Valley Park. Murrysville has lost a champion and I have lost a great friend.

Shelly Tichy

Hank was an outdoorsman all his life, always hunting, skiing, fishing or hiking. He would take a walk out back in the woods just to enjoy the peacefulness of Nature and maybe catch a glimpse of some deer or turkeys. He especially liked working outdoors, so the Conservancy was a natural fit for him, hiking and maintaining the trails.

We became members of the Conservancy when it was formed to acquire the Kellman Reserve. Hank was not able to be an active member until he retired.

Hank was very fond of Mount and they formed a special bond while working with the PV Volunteers, first designing and building the parking lot and later working on the trails.

Joanne Kendall

A Parcel in Murrysville for Preservation

Dick Byers

I am amazed at how much development has taken place in Murrysville since I left eight years ago. Every time I drive the back roads when I'm in town, I see buildings that weren't there on my previous visit. The amount of land left to be placed in the public trust is fast diminishing. People who moved here for Murrysville's "rural character" are rapidly seeing it become more urbanized by the week.

There is a 21.6 acre parcel, zoned R2, which adjoins the Lillian Kellman Nature Reserve. This is the Skena Farm Estate that fronts on North Hills Road. The land includes a scenic pond, which forms the headwaters of the stream that runs through the Kellman Park property. A developer has made an offer to the Estate to purchase the property for \$435,000.00. Some heirs of the Estate are trying to save the property from development; are working to obtain a one-year grace period, then came to the Westmoreland Conservancy's November meeting requesting help. That is a hefty amount of money for our organization to raise in a year's time and the board members were immediately stymied by the price tag. It is certainly well beyond the capacity of the Conservancy's finances.

However, we shouldn't write this off without first exploring our membership resources. After all, a similar amount of money was raised (when matching Government funds are counted) to buy the Kellman Farm in the 1990s. Perhaps there is someone out there with the experience in fund raising

who also has the time and energy to handle the job. Never say it can't be done. I have too often seen the impossible done before. Some years ago the Pennsylvania chapter of the Nature Conservancy sought to buy a small parcel of land in the southeast corner of the state that contained a pond that was home to the rare bog turtle. The price tag was \$500,000. The seller agreed to sell it to the conservancy rather than a developer if they could come up with the money in a specified period of time. They took the challenge and, incredibly, they succeeded. They had everyone in the area involved, from local businessmen, schools, Lion and Kiwanis clubs, nature organizations, and the Boy & and Girl Scouts troops. They had bake sales, car washes, walkathons, birdathons, spaghetti dinners, flea markets, raffles and grant proposals. The stores in several towns had donation boxes on the counter. I remember an elementary school that raised \$2000 – all for a turtle. That was about 20 years ago. Granted, they had a lot more time, but it shows what can be done if a group can get organized and set their mind to it. What it takes is an organizer who can devote a lot of hours and energy. I think the time limit, rather than the money is the biggest stumbling block and perhaps the best route to go would be for grant proposals, but even there we are just narrowly within the time required for foundation grants to get approved and processed.

Why should this land be saved? Fifty years ago no one would have blinked an eye had this property been developed. But 50 years ago there were 131 million less Americans, a lot more open space, and Murrysville was still rural. Aside from the fact that suburban green space is getting scarce, there are lots of other reasons for preserving this land. It will act as a natural buffer to the community owned Kellman Nature Reserve. The two properties would combine to form a 77-acre tract having a pond in the middle of town, close to local schools which have already used it in their education programs. It would allow more access to the Kellman Reserve from North Hills Road. There is room there for a parking lot in which buses could turn around. Keeping the land open means less population and traffic in Murrysville. One less housing development means less pressure on school classroom space, the hiring of more teachers, less pressure on the sewage system which has been constantly forced to expand, less snow removal and road repair required, etc. etc. Need I say more? I think most of our members know the advantages of open space over more sprawl.

If any person or persons would like to take on this challenge, please make your intentions known by contacting the Westmoreland Conservancy via email at contact@westmorelandconservancy.org or via regular mail at P.O. Box 446, Murrysville 15668 or by calling Clarence Skena directly at (724) 327-3656.

Unscramble the Habitat

1) dlaodwon rofets _____

2) sairpeir _____

3) tnmainuos _____

4) asmersh _____

5) rested _____

6) ratund _____

7) virers _____

9) locar erfe _____

10) rolap reaas _____

Westmoreland Conservancy

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

contact@westmorelandconservancy.org

Schedule of Upcoming Events

Wednesday, January 24th: Monthly meeting

Sunday, January 28th: Photo Outing at Buttermilk Falls. Meet at Murrysville Panera Bread at 7:45 AM.

Sunday, February 4th: Photo Outing at Pleasant Valley Park, 1 PM in the parking lot.

Wednesday, February 28th: Monthly meeting

Sunday, March 4th: Photo outing at Phipps Conservatory

Wednesday, March 28th : Monthly Meeting

2006 Board of Governors/Officers

Officers: President – Mount Fitzpatrick

Vice President – Shelly Tichy

Secretary – Doug Bauman

Treasurer - Bjorg Granger

Governors: Dick Byers, Lisa Hyland, Mark Emerson, Joanne Kendall, Richard Wagner, Cary Bohl, Doug Siler

The meetings are open, and we look forward to seeing you there. Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of each month in the Municipal Room of the Murrysville Library at 7:30 pm.

January 24th

February 28th

March 28th

The next Newsletter is scheduled for **April 2007**.

Westmoreland Conservancy

An all volunteer, non-profit, 501c-3 Corporation dedicated to acquiring and preserving rural and rustic lands for the public good.

Westmoreland Conservancy

Membership Application

P.O. Box 446

Murrysville, PA 15668

Membership Levels

Individual.....\$15.00

Family.....20.00

Business membership.....40.00

Additional Donation.....\$_____

Name_____

Address_____

City_____

State _____ Zip Code_____

e-mail_____

For your convenience, you may also renew your membership or give donations through our website at www.westmorelandconservancy.org