

# Belle Vernon Area Rotary Club



and the  
Youghiogheny River Trail



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a jfj2 production  
2019

The Belle Vernon Area Rotary Club has been an active supporter of the Youghiogheny River Trail section of the Great American Passage almost from its inception.

This support is ongoing and manifests itself in a variety of ways from volunteering for the Over The Hill Gang maintenance projects, trail events and club-sponsored projects.

Most visible of these projects are the shelter at Smithton Beach and restoration of the rail car at the West Newton Trail Office, which was undertaken with the help of many people, several businesses and the West Newton Rotary Club.

Other club-sponsored projects are markers designating points of interest along the YRT and a special marker noting the 1907 Darr Mine Disaster, in which 239 men and boys were killed in an explosion at the Van Meter mine.

The enthusiasm of club members is also exemplified by their recreational use of the trail with family and friends.

This book is a survey of these projects and a reflection of the Belle Vernon Area Rotary Club's dedication to and respect for the YRT and GAP. It is dedicated to all those who work hard to make the YRT perhaps the finest section of the GAP



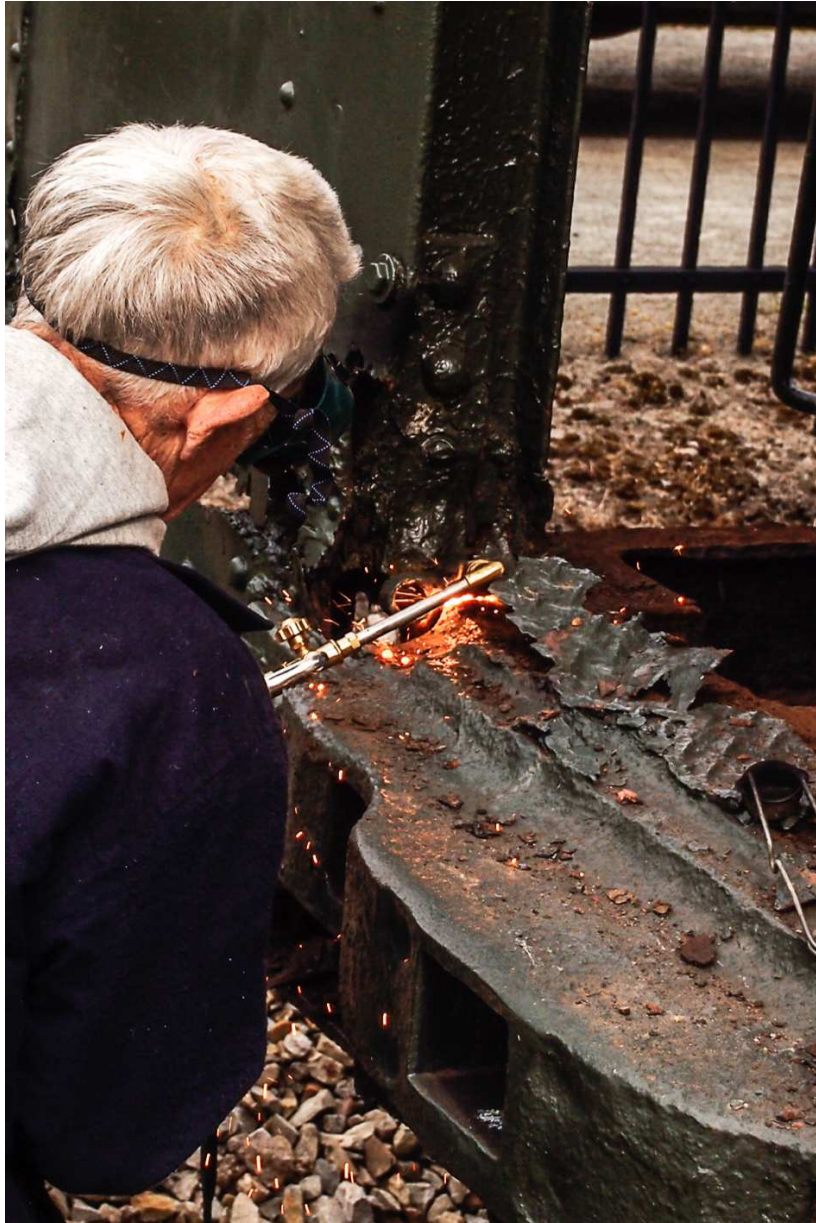
**R**enovation of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie combination baggage and passenger car began in 2015.

The approximately \$15,000 project included a new interior and exterior paint job, and 24 new double-hung windows.

This is the second renovation of the car since it was moved from the Buddtown section of West Newton on Earth Day 1999.

Rotarian Sam Cover, co-project manager with his wife Sandy, touches up some paint in the photo at right.







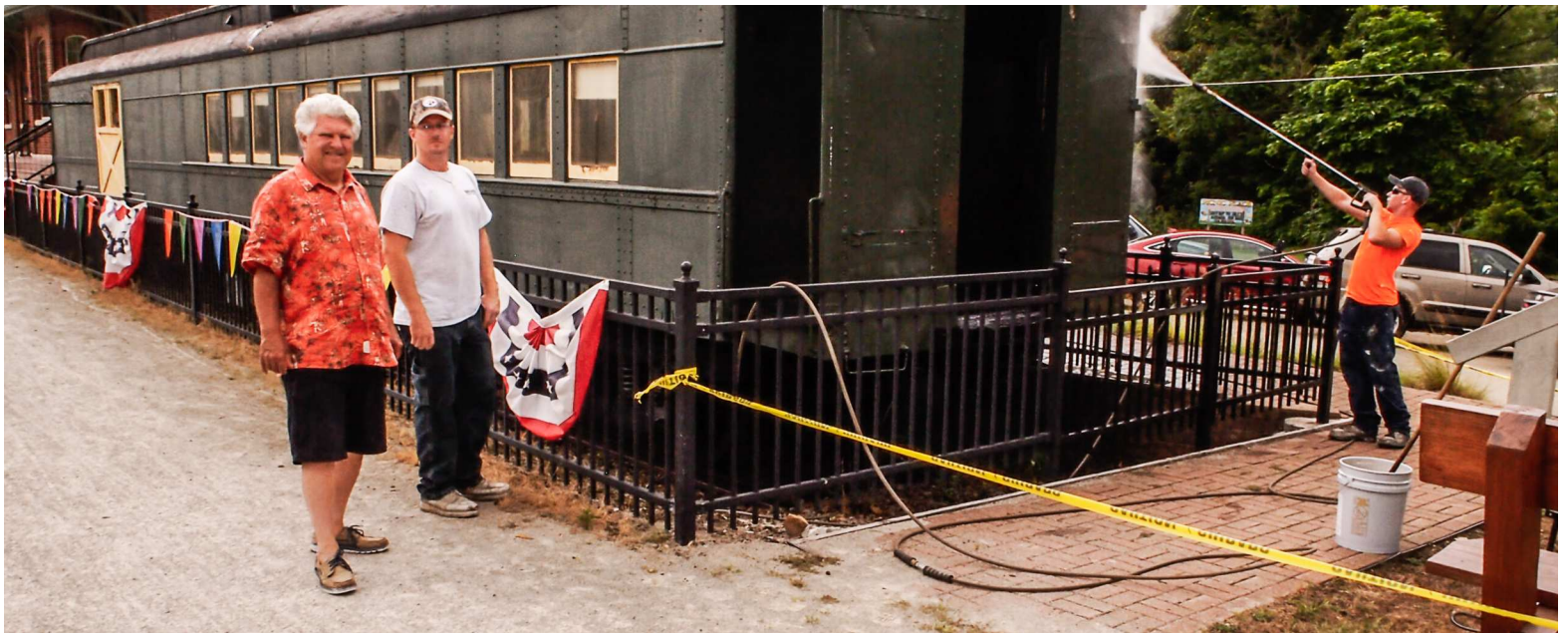


Chuck and Joe Wadsworth repair rust spots at the rear door.



A workman primes the car in preparation for painting.





Sam Cover and and Select Paint Services owner Bart Thompson, bottom photo, at the project site.









Cover and representatives of Sherwin-Williams Paint Co. discuss what paint to use on the car.



Work on the car continued as trail users enjoyed the trail.





A worker for Window World of Pittsburgh installs a new window.











Scott Shoff, center, took a stack of roughcut lumber and fashioned a new door for the car.









The task of re-purposing the rail car was chiefly undertaken by co-project manager Sandy Cover.

Originally intended to be an environmental learning center for students in area school districts, a concept that never materialized, it is now intended to be a YRT resource center that is open on special occasions or on request.

Sandy Cover, far right, discusses the interior renovation with, from left, Carol Cociolone and Marsha Christ.









Artist Francine Mendicino paints a coke oven on the rear door of the rail car.



Sandy prepares a display in the car.







Rotarians Sam and Sandy Cover, left, and Theresa and Pat McCulloch during an open house.





Pittsburgh Trib reporter Joe Napsha, left, interviews Francine and Sam about the rail car project.





Sam Cover points out a house that served as a station on the Underground Railroad to visitors.





This house served as a station on the Underground Railroad.

The pavilion constructed at Smithton Beach was the first major project on the trail by the club.

It was built by prisoners from the Westmoreland County Jail with funds provided by the Club.







Club members each year perform maintenance on the pavilion.















Rotarians Tom Yoder and Frank Jaworowski trim a hedge at the pavilion.





A club outing at the pavilion.

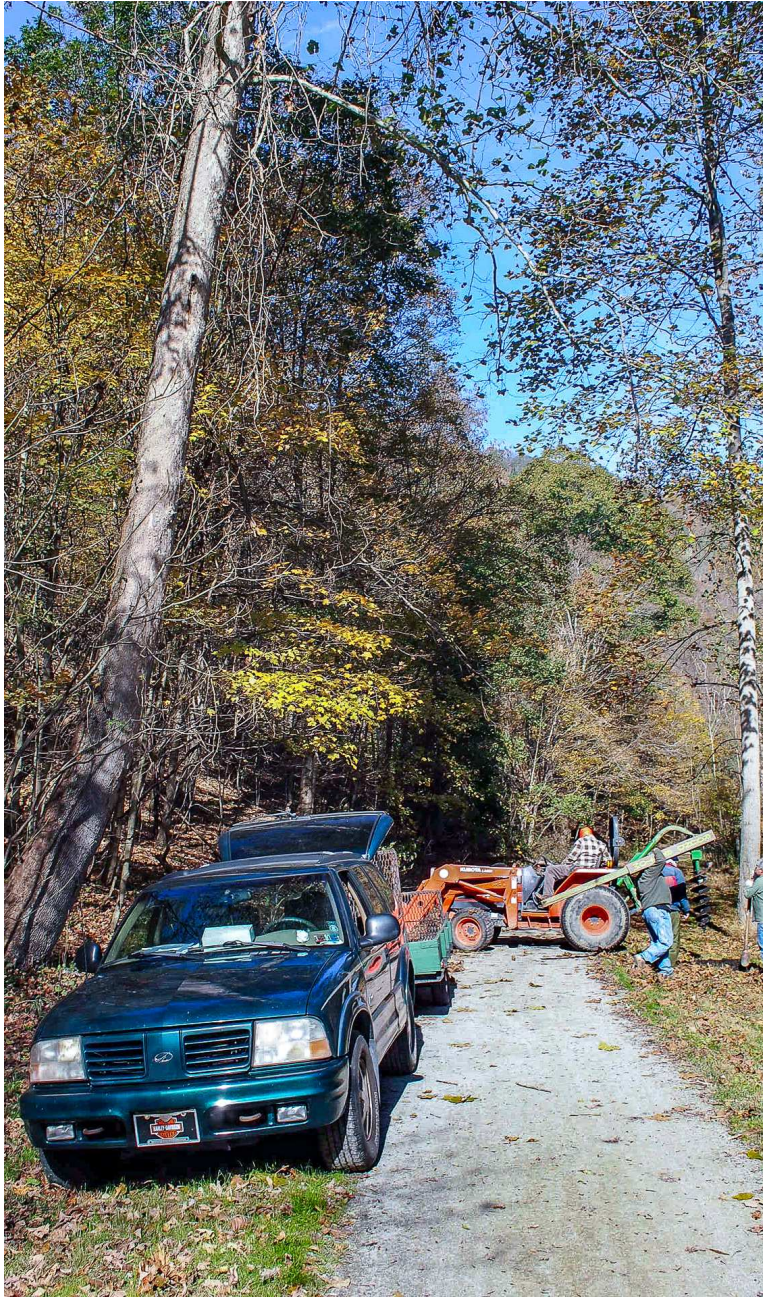


The club placed markers at many points of interest along the YRT.

These markers are explained and pinpointed with displays in the rail car.















**R**otarian Fred Exely examines the Darr Mine Disaster marker at Van Meter as Sam Cover and Dave Hamilton look on.

On Dec. 19, 1909, 239 miners were killed in an explosion at the mine. It remains one of the worst mine disasters in America.

This project was conceived and managed by Hamilton, who is retired from the mining industry.





Club members often volunteer to help at various trail events and work details.

Dave Hamilton, at left, directs participants in the WYTC's annual Poker Run.











Members of the Belle Vernon Area Rotary Club are frequent users of the YRT and GAP.

Fred Exely, at right, pauses at a point overlooking the Youghiogheny River near Ohiopyle.

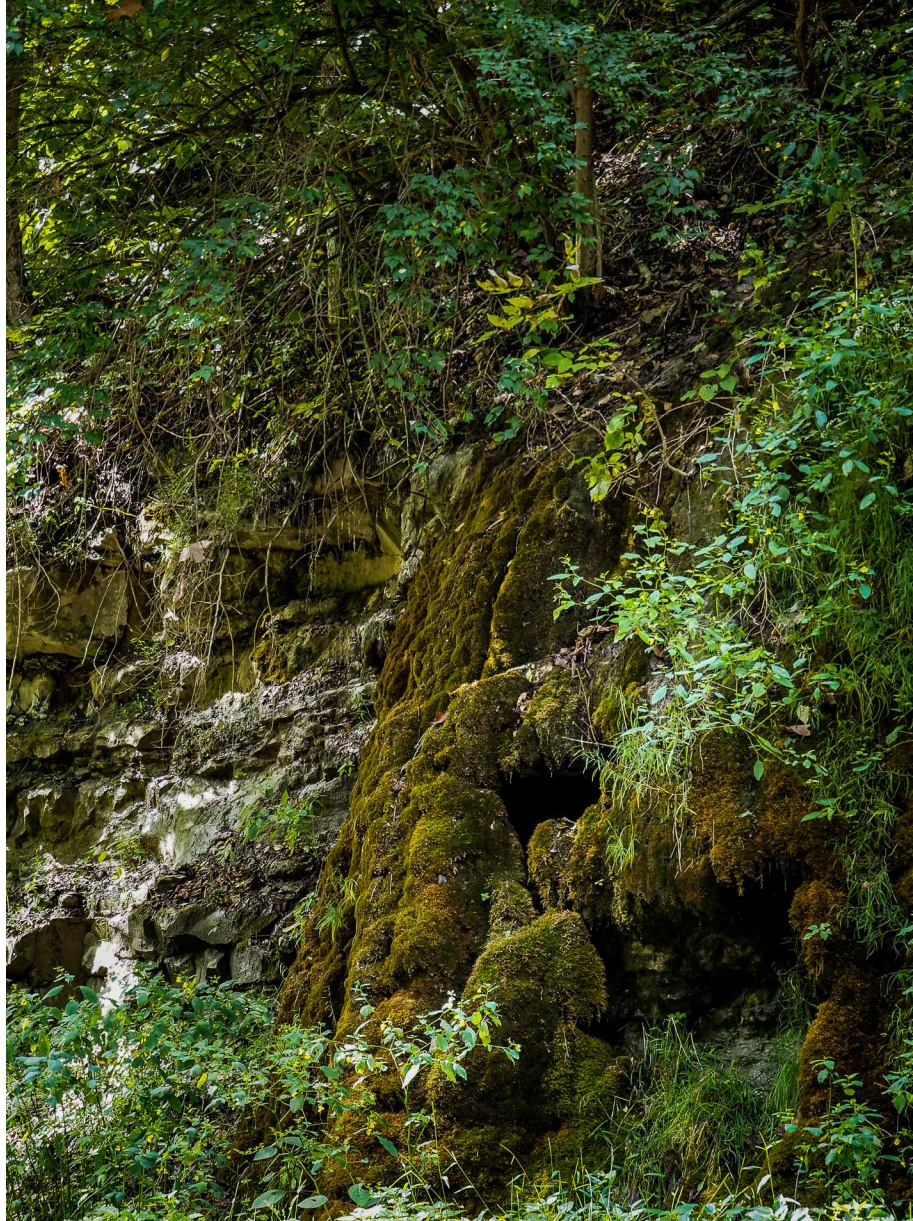






Exely participates in the WYTC's annual Poker Run.





12,000-year-old Port Royal tufa



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*by j frank jaworowski*  
*all images by j frank jaworowski*

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Designed using Adobe Photoshop Lightroom





**R**otary is a global network of 1.2 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem solvers acting to create lasting change around the world and in our local communities.

The Belle Vernon Area Rotary Club is a proud member of this network and a firm believer in the Rotary creed of Service Above Self. Locally, in addition to the trail our club supports veterans, students, families, and individuals in need.

Our club meets at 6:30 p.m. Thursdays, in the Clubhouse Grill, Cedarbrook Golf Course, Rostraver.  
Consider becoming a member

