

The Valley INDEPENDENT - Thursday, June 22, 2000

# Sharing experiences, enjoying the scenery

## Biker uncovers close-to-home treasure too often overlooked

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Daily Courier staff writer April Straughters continues her journey with the Youghiogheny River sojourners. Here, she relates her experiences from day three of the trip.*

By **APRIL STRAUGHTERS**  
Tribune-Review News Service

One lesson I learned during my trip along the Yough Bike/Hike Trail is that people always seem to take for granted what they have. Unfortunately, I am one of those people.

The Yough Bike/Hike Trail literally runs right behind my house, and I have never ridden a bike on it — until now.

Yeah, I've walked a couple of

miles, a couple of times, but I have never ridden along the scenic route.

Wednesday, we biked 21.5 miles from Ohiopyle to Adelaide along the trail, stopping at Yough Park, Connellsville, for lunch.

I totally enjoyed my ride on the trail. Most of all I am proud to say that I have traveled that far on a bicycle, something I have never done before.

The scenic route was absolutely breathtaking. Beautiful trees and flowers lined the winding trail, creating a green-like tunnel for travel.

We could hear the roaring river below, and if we would take the time to really look alongside the trail, we would



John Brothers/Tribune-Review News Service

**RIDING HIGH** — The sojourners biked into Connellsville Wednesday, completing a 20-mile bike trek from Ohiopyle State Park.

find all kinds of interesting things, like small streams and waterfalls.

The ride was too interesting to be tiresome. In fact, we came  
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upon our destination quicker than I expected.

We all traveled in small groups, sometimes coupling up with people who were traveling the same speed or who sparked a conversation.

I really enjoyed the conversations I had. Our trip gave me the opportunity to really get to know a couple of the sojourners.

I began my trip with Bill Hall of McKeesport. Hall would stop along the trail to take pictures of different areas and of some of the passing bikers.

Hall told me that he read, in

Travel and Leisure magazine, that the Yough Bike/Hike Trail was listed among the 19 best trails in the world. That made me feel very proud of our area.

Then Hall and I stopped for a rest with a group of fellow sojourners, who picked the perfect spot for a brief philosophical conversation. We all talked about how it's a shame that the stress of everyday living does not allow people to enjoy more days like these.

It was when we stopped at Connellsville that I realized the treasure that I — and I'm sure many of the locals — take for

granted.

When we road our bicycles through the West Side to Yough Park, I told a couple of my traveling buddies how close I lived to the trail. They, in turn, talked about how lucky I was. And I agreed.

It made me realize how lucky I am to live in Connellsville — near the bike trail; next to the Youghiogheny River; only minutes away from Ohiopyle and other recreational venues, that people travel miles and miles to enjoy.

But, like I said, people seem to take these things for granted.

Personally, I hope that we continue with our progress within the community and hope everyone works together to continue development here. After seeing how the sojourners, responded, I know this is worth the investment.