AMD&ART

Creating Community Assets... *Volume I, No. I - Dec. 1996*

New Office, New Folks, New Era!

Greetings, and welcome to the inaugural edition of **AMD&ART**! We thought it was time to bring our Interested Folks up to date, and among the many things afoot, probably the most exciting news is that the Project has moved to a new office in downtown Altoona. Please make sure to clip out our new address from this page and save it for handy reference! Speaking of exciting stuff, we have three new AMD&ART team members:

Brenda Brown, visiting scholar at the University of Illinois' Department of Landscape Architecture, Champaign, IL, has been with us since last August. She has advanced degrees in both sculpture and landscape architecture, and is experienced as an editor and writer as well as artist and designer. Among her other current projects, she serves as committee chair for the catalog and exhibit, *Eco-revelatory Design: Nature Constructed/ Nature Revealed*.

John H. Turner, a recent B.A. recipient in Philosophy from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, is now on board. An AmeriCorps member, John will help foster communications and project development. He will be in the (new!) office on a daily basis, ready to help, so feel free to give him a call if you need anything.

Roberta Moore, MFA Photography student at Penn State, has joined the team, in order to document our progress and capture some of her own remarkable images. You should be seeing the results of this good luck in the next mailing.

AMD&ART

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The Mission...

AMD&ART is about transforming liabilities into assets. It is obvious what liabilities are in question: residents of this region are all too familiar with the choking, orange-stained streams that have come to symbolize the heavy cost of Pennsylvania's proud industrial heritage. In other words, AMD&ART is about making assets out of acid mine drainage, and finishing a job our forefathers started. What sort of assets do we mean, and what kind of job do we have to finish? Well, cleaning up AMD-polluted streams would be a start. Indeed, generating clean, life-sustaining water is possible through passive, affordable approaches. The way we see it, though, simply treating water is only half the battle, reclaiming a loss but somehow missing out on a chance to convert reclamation into advancement - a chance our region can't afford to miss.

Admittedly, at first it sounds a little strange to talk about gaining wonderful things from a polluted orange stream, or even from a clear, formerly polluted one. However, through combining the disciplines of science, art, and history in a community setting, we hope to change the way AMD remediation is perceived. When viewed from a transformed perspective, an AMD treatment site is no longer something to be kept out of view. And when a community's perception changes, it is open to and forms its own ideas about *making something* out of what is there, about finishing a job.

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Project Sites Fit Into Place

To date, the AMD&ART team has selected three sites as stages in a national demonstration project: **Vintondale, the Hughes Borehole, and the Dark Shade Watershed**. Because these sites are to be used in combination, it was critical that they fit together like puzzle pieces, forming an integrated whole. Here's how it works!

Vintondale
Pilot Project - Our Chance to Show Community & Design Advantages

Hughes Borehole
Larger Discharge, Including Significant Educational Element

Dark Shade
Largest Scope - Deals with an Entire River Basin

Recent Workshops a Success

Vintondale (Sept. 27-30): After trooping out in the pouring rain to look at the site and fretting about the three fountains in the creek, the team realized we could address a discharge located on the south branch of the Blacklick Creek, about one mile upstream of its confluence with the north branch. Vintondale will be a "spark" to light the torch of further initiative. In January, we will also be scheduling a meeting in Vintondale, to work with the community on project content and design.

Hughes Borehole (Oct. 11-14): By far the most striking site under consideration, this "killer discharge" has turned its immediate surroundings into a virtual moonscape of vibrant orange crust tinged with algae. Located in a hemlock forest about fifty yards north of the Little Conemaugh River, near the village of Johnstown, this discharge alone is responsible for 8% of the pollution load to the entire Little Conemaugh System. The severity and shocking appearance of this site lend support to the idea of incorporating an educational/ interpretive element into the project.

Dark Shade (Oct. 18-21): This project is the largest in scope, dealing with up to ten known AMD sources in the entire Dark Shade Watershed, creating a corridor bordered by two historic landmarks - Forbes Trail to the south and Shade Furnace to the north. This corridor offers exciting and highly visible treatment possibilities in the context of an entire river basin.

(Mission, continued from page 1)

Accordingly, AMD&ART is in the business of discovering and building the visions that specific mine discharges present, with an eye on the larger goal of creating a single national demonstration project that incorporates several sites throughout the region. Every site is different, with size and location of the discharge, surrounding terrain, and a host of other factors entering into play. That's why our cross-disciplinary approach is so important - as the scientist, artist, and historian view a site through their respective lenses, images begin to come into focus, images that are revised and sharpened by the community they are designed to serve. This process results in ideas for creative, effective, community-based projects that contribute to a profound sense of whole place, where past, present, and future are a seamless cloth that binds and strengthens neighbors as well as generations. And underneath all this is a commitment to real, sustainable solutions - we aren't the "quick fix" crew.

Finally, AMD&ART is about cultivating community involvement, because we realize that nothing we could do would be meaningful without the active, creative participation of those who care most. Therefore, the entire project is a constant dialogue among community and AMD&ART team members. Together, we can build a new and larger sense of the possible, a renewed bond of common heritage and future commitment.

THE AMD&ART TEAM

T. ALLAN COMP, PH.D. - *Heritage Resources Manager, Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission (SPHPC); Hollidaysburg, PA.* Combining skills in economic history and the history of technology with experience in historic preservation planning, non-profit management and private-sector development, Dr. Comp also serves as the AMD&ART Project Director.

BOB DEASON - *Partner, EarthTech, Inc., Consulting Scientists and Engineers; Somerset, PA.* Bob is involved in design and construction management of mitigation wetlands and wetlands for treatment of AMD.

JULIE BARGMAN - *Landscape Architecture Consult ant; Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Virginia; Charlottesville, VA.* Julie has received numerous design awards and fellowships for her work in mining sites and industrial landscapes.

STACY LEVY - *Founder and President of Sere Native landscape Restoration Ltd.; State College, PA.* Stacy is a sculptor whose work specializes in making apparent what is not readily visible in nature.

MICHAEL OPPENHEIMER - *Public Artist/Consultant. Research fellow at the Studio for Creative Inquiry, Carnegie-Melon University; Pittsburgh, PA.* Michael has worked with fellow Hughes Teammate Peter Richards on the innovative Byxbee Park project, the huge landfill-turned-art-park in Palo Alto, CA.

PETER RICHARDS - *Director of Art Programs, The Exploratorium; San Francisco, CA.* The Exploratorium is considered to be the world leader in hands-on science exploration. Peter's work is often a celebration of a particular place or situation and encourages people to notice the special things in their surroundings that are often ignored.

BRENDA BROWN - *Visiting Scholar at the University of Illinois' Department of Landscape Architecture, Champaign, IL.* *See her introduction on page 1.*

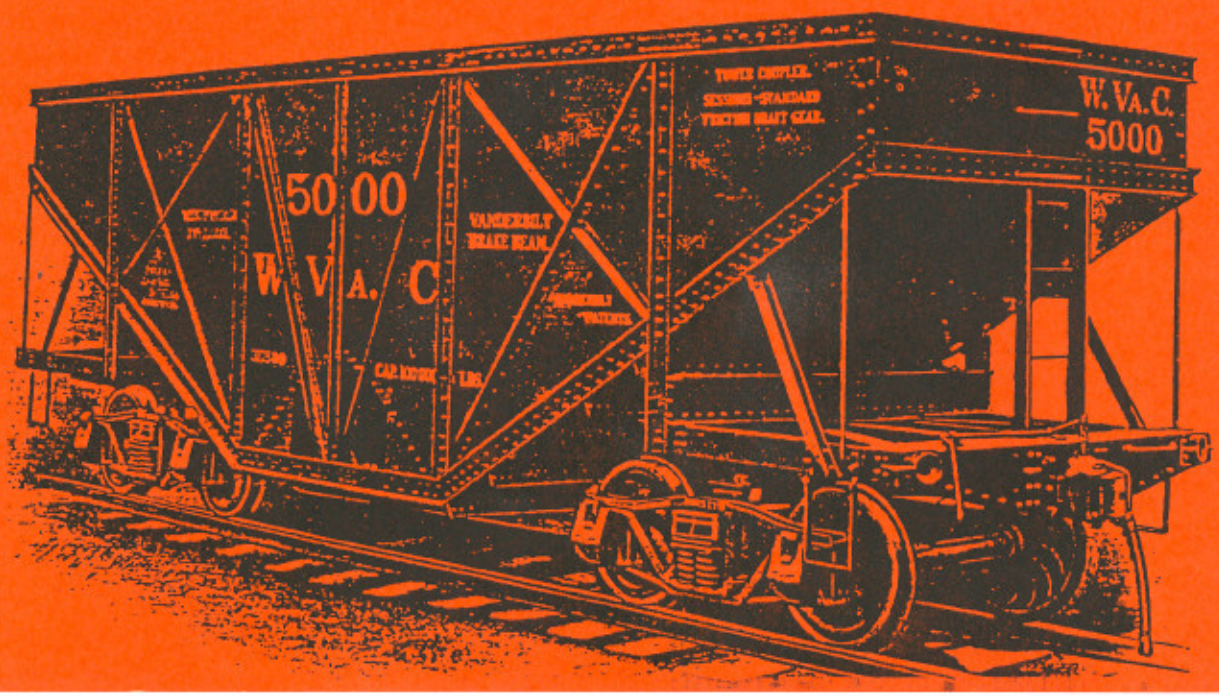
ANGELO CIOTTI - *Visiting Professor, National Academy of Arts and Designs; Beijing, China.* Angelo is a professor of art whose work in coal mining sites and other areas is well known in Pennsylvania.

ROB MCCOMBIE - *AMD&ART Project Assistant; Altoona, PA.* Rob is a technical writer involved with the research and planning of environmental projects in Southwestern Pa.

JOHN H. TURNER - *AMD&ART Project Assistant; Altoona, PA.* *See his introduction on page 1.* John was not yet with us as the workshops took place, but he looks forward to participating in future events.

LILY YEH - *Executive Director, Village of Arts and Humanities in North Philadelphia. Professor of Art and History, University of Arts; Philadelphia, PA.* Although unable to attend the workshops, Lily will continue to work with us as our separate project teams reassemble to discuss their work and future direction. A remarkable community collaborator, Lily serves as the deep conscious of AMD&ART.

This project is sponsored by the Allegheny Heritage Development Corporation, the private non-profit outgrowth of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission, which works to enhance historic, recreational, and cultural resources within the region as focal points for cultural tourism, economic development, and community improvement.

Additional funding is being provided by the Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps, national AmeriCorps Program; the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Interdisciplinary and Visual Arts programs; STUDIO for Creative Inquiry, Carnegie Mellon University; and EarthTech, Inc.

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