

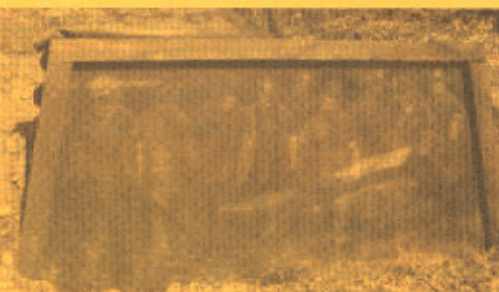
INITIATED IN 1994

SPRING 2005

A PORTAL INTO THE PAST

Completed in November 2004, the Miner's Memorial: Mine Portal sits near the park's History Wetlands across from the Great Map Project. The 6-by-12-foot structure is embedded in the hillside occupying the once bustling mine no. 6 entrance. With the faces taken from a 1938 film shot by Vintondale resident Julius Morey, the etched men appear on life-size slabs of black stone and seem to be in the middle of a shift-change. In the image the hunched-over men exiting the portal show a face weary of the days end, while those entering

the portal stand tall and proud, ready for the days labors. Nearly 100 people were on site for the unveiling and there was no doubt a sense of pride in the atmosphere as those miners were honored. The artwork serves as a tribute and reminder of those whose bodies, hearts, and souls who so diligently worked this once prolific hillside.



View of the mine portal artwork on site.

PERSONAL STORY: AN INTERVIEW WITH MERLE HUNTER BY DANA ZUFALL

Since its opening in 1906, Mine #6 has seen a lot of changes over the years and so has Merle Hunter. With only the completion of an eighth grade education, Merle started working at the age of 14, holding various jobs as a carpenter, truck driver, and a woodsman. Following in his fathers steps, when Merle turned 18 he started his job in the mines. "The mine changed hands a lot of times," explains Hunter. The technology changed, too. During his years as a miner Merle went from using only picks, shovels, and carts to using joy loaders that loaded the coal onto a belt.

When the mines in Wherum closed in 1929, he started walking to work in Vintondale's mines. In 1937, he moved to his company house in Vintondale. "I worked mostly outside the mines on the tippie," he explains, "but sometimes I was inside and they gave you rubber knee pads and boots. Sometimes I didn't work everyday and sometimes I worked 7, 10, or more hours a day. You worked till the order was filled. It was darn hard work with little pay and you were

paid by tonnage. Your check number was on your cart so they knew who loaded the coal." While Merle agrees that the park can preserve some of the history of the site what it cannot do is tell the day to day stories like those that Merle can share. Merle recalls the risks and hard work of being a miner. He had a superintendent, Otto Hoffman, who was killed on site in 1930 on the tippie. "He dropped his pipe and when we reached down to get it a bar hit him."

Merle's wife, of 69 years, Winnie recalls the mining days as well.



Above: Merle with his wife, Winnie, (left) and daughter, Bonnie, (right).

"There was no showers on site. So he'd ride home in the back of a pick-up truck and he'd be covered in dirt."

I showed Merle pictures of Vintondale's AMD&ART Park and the new mine portal, because of his health Merle has not been able to visit the park yet. "This is a good idea," he says. I ask him if he can recognize any faces etched on the stone. "I could recognize names he says, but not the faces." Bonnie, Merle's daughter, and I explain to him the layout of the park to give him an idea of how it has changed since the mine closed. Merle tells me how the town has changed from what it used to be. "Everyone had to use the company store. The company issued \$5, \$10, \$15 coupons for the store to deduct from when you bought stuff. If you owed more than the coupons then you owed them (the company) money. The mine had its own powerhouse so you didn't pay an electric bill and your rent came out of your pay. Sometimes it was years before you had money (left from your pay check) to spend." The best way for us to honor the past is to tell the story. When I walk the site and I visit the portal, I remember the interview with Merle Hunter and I appreciate the work that was done there.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Completed projects: mine portal
- New staff
- Celebrate the Park's completion July 8th & 9th
- Pages 3&4 Vintondale Community News
- Up and Coming Projects

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Vintondale's AMD&ART Park Celebration July 8th and 9th

see page 2 for complete story

A NEW FACE IN THE CROWD



Nicki Slagle (left) gives me a site tour in January.

Over the last 10 years AMD&ART has seen many faces pass through its doors. And just when you think the project is winding down and everyone is settled, they throw a new one into the mix. Hello, my name is Dana Zufall and I am the new AmeriCorps OSM/VISTA and Outreach Coordinator for AMD&ART. In May 2004 I graduated from Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa with a B.S. in biology and a minor in

writing. I am more than thrilled to be a part of this project. As a recent graduate I feel lucky to be in a job with so much hands-on experience in environmental work.

The topic of AMD is one that is very close to my heart. I grew up about 20 minutes west of Johnstown and as a native of Coal Country I feel especially grounded in this project. Growing up, many of my friend's fathers were miners and I can re-

member when the Cone-maugh was a bright orange. I am excited about seeing change in a place I call home.

Coming in to the project in its final stage means I will be working on the planning of the Park's Celebration (July 8th & 9th—mark your calendars!). While in this position I will also try to maintain the newsletter on a quarterly basis and look for monthly publications for AMD&ART. I look forward to seeing you

THE WORLD LOOKS TO AMD&ART

As the information highway spans the gaps between the world and small towns, places like Vintondale, Pa are gaining international exposure. Thanks to the World Wide Web the AMD&ART website (www.amdandart.org) has seen many visitors. Of the 6,809 guest to visit the

AMD&ART website over 10% of them are from outside the United States. Giving AMD&ART and Vintondale exposure in places like Chile, Korea, and Australia. Vintondale's AMD&ART Park is being used as a model for environmental clean-up because of its multi-disciplinary approach.

Other forms of media

are spanning the globe as well. In March AMD&ART was a featured story in Reclamation Matters Magazine Spring/Summer '05 issue, a publication for the American Society of Mining and Reclamation. To obtain a copy of this publication contact Lisa K o p o c h i n s k i at (800).481.0265.

WE'RE ON THE
WEB!

WWW.AMDANDART.ORG

VINTONDALE'S AMD&ART PARK CELEBRATION

July 8 Vintondale's AMD&ART History Symposium: understanding AMD&ART in multiple disciplines

1pm – 5pm Symposium featuring national and local experts such as:

Dr. Brent Glass from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Robert Martin from West Virginia Civilians Conservation Corps

Denise Weber to speak on local history from her book *Delano's Domain*

JULY 8th & 9th



July 9 Vintondale's AMD&ART Park Celebration

10am Parade

11:00am-12pm Opening Ceremony

1pm-3pm Concession stands for lunch, Community Activities, and Site Tours

**CELEBRATE THE PARKS
COMPLETION**

VINTONDALE'S VOICE

SPRING 05 ISSUE 1

A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Spring 2005 brought with it the re-establishment of the Vintondale Borough Planning Commission (VBPC). Originally created by Vintondale Borough Council in 1974, the VBPC has been in a dormant state for many years. On April 21, 2005 Vintondale Borough Council re-established the VBPC after approving a list of nominees with alternating terms of service. The VBPC consists of 9 members and no more than 3 can be Borough Council members. Please welcome your 9 new Planning Commissioners:

- Rob Garver (2 year term)
- Angie Kupchella (4 year term)
- Theresa Gresko (2 year term)
- Dee Columbus (3 year term)
- Jeremy Vasilko (2 year term)
- Tony Columbus (4 year term)
- Mary Brown (3 year term)
- Barb Uncapher (3 year term)
- Brenda Cassol (4 year term)

Why a Planning Commission?

According to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania one of the most important powers and responsibilities of local government is its authority to plan and guide growth of municipal services and public improvements so that development occurs in an orderly, rational and reasonable manner. One important reason for planning is to anticipate the needs of the people for public improvements and provide sen-

sible means for meeting those identified needs. Planning commission members give the Council an opportunity to expand its contact and understanding of community concerns by doubling or tripling the number of eyes and ears turned to community interest. A planning commission is on the front-line regarding land use issues and plays a major role in giving advice and providing recommendations to a governing body. At the local level, planning commissions are crucial in developing recommendations for implementing changes in land use and promoting responsible land use practices.

Where can I be heard?

The newly re-established VBPC has been given office space at the AMD&ART Education Center, 671 Main Street in Vintondale. Additionally, the VBPC will share meeting room space and telephone service. To reach the VBPC by telephone or to leave a message please dial 814.749.7552. For any resident who has difficulty attending a scheduled community meeting (work, school, health, etc.) you can still participate in the development of Vintondale by submitting your community views via email at vintondale_listens@yahoo.com. During the months of May – July 2005 the Vintondale Borough Planning Commission will be holding weekly scheduled meetings on Thursday nights from 7:00PM – 8:30PM at the AMD&ART Education Center, but note there is no meeting on the third Thursday of each month as this is a Council meeting night. Starting in August 2005 the VBPC will be holding monthly meetings, scheduled for the first Thursday of every month.

What's next?

The VBPC and local residents are working together to address a number of concerns recently identified within the community. Using the 2001 Community Vision Plan as a catalyst, the VBPC hopes to promote desired land uses. One important land use project in Vintondale is the AMD&ART Park. The VBPC and Vintondale residents of all ages are making plans for a community parade to celebrate the completion of Vintondale's AMD&ART Park on July 9, 2005. Bring the family and experience Vintondale's AMD&ART Park for yourselves...see first hand what multi-disciplinary collaboration and community engagement can do with an idea, a vision and purpose.



Community members get together for coffee and conversation at the AMD&ART Education Center.

Join us for VINTONDALE'S
AMD&ART Park Celebration on
July 8th and 9th.



Vintondale youth attend a Parks and Recreation Workshop at the AMD&ART Education Center. Local youth spent 1-1/2 hours assessing the condition of the Maple Street and 6th Street Parks and gave their ideas for improvements. All attendees participated in designing parade floats, these designs are on display in the AMD&ART Education Center.

Vintondale's Flood Protection Issues

One of the Borough issues being addressed by the Vintondale Borough Planning Commission is Flood Protection, specifically the levies. Over the years, no real plan for maintenance of these facilities has been in place. However, that is all changing now.

Our first issue concerned manholes that had been installed in the levy at the western end of the Borough just off of Main Street. These were red-flagged by the

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) during an inspection and were mandated by PADEP to be removed. This is the responsibility of the Blacklick Valley Municipal Authority, and they are working with PADEP. We anticipate this situation being corrected this Spring.

Another issue cited by PADEP regarding the condition of the levies was the heavy vegetation growth. This is unacceptable and must be addressed immediately. The Commission, after reviewing various options, is obtaining pricing information to spray the vegetation to eradicate it using safe, approved materials. Once the material is applied to the levies and the vegetation dies, the area will be as-

essed for any other required attention. Our Operation and Maintenance Plan will be strictly adhered to in the future.

We'll continue to update residents on our progress through this newsletter. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact the Commission through our voice mail and/or email. This contact information is found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Dee Columbus investigates the heavy vegetation growth along Vintondale's Flood Plain.



A finalist!!

Nominated by the Vintondale Borough Council, AMD&ART was recently named a finalist for the 2005 Pennsylvania Environmental Council Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award in the category of Green Design. This award recognizes the community's efforts and support in the design of the Vintondale AMD&ART park.

CONTACT THE VBPC

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AMD&ART: STAFF PRESENT AT CONFERENCES

Nicki Slagle presented "Community Service or the Joy of Making a Difference Far Outweighs the Joy of Making a Decent Living Wage" at Penn State University's Department of Landscape Architecture on February 4, 2005.

On March 18, 2005 Nicki Slagle and Dana Zufall participated in the Cambria County

Waterfestival, an environmental showcase for local 6th graders. Nicki, AMD&ART's Site Coordinator, educated the children on the project while Dana, AMD&ART's Outreach Coordinator, explained the biological effects of acidic water. The children participated in an interactive experiment by making their own litmus paper and then

using it to test common household items for acidity.

Nicki and Dana presented at the Portage Area High School Earth Week Celebration on April 18th and 19th.

On April 23rd 2005, Dana will be presenting a booth at the Westmoreland County Earth Day Celebration at St. Vincent's College.



Dana and Nicki giving a presentation to local 6th graders on the effects of acid mine drainage.

OSM/VISTA AWARD

The OSM (Office of Surface Mining) VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) Watershed Development Team was formed in 2001 to address water quality issues due to coal mining in low income communities of Appalachia. Under the direction of T. Allan Comp, the Team is now thirty strong serving in 8 states stretching from Pennsylvania to Alabama. As a team, in



OSM/VISTA team members come together for a picture at awards ceremony.

2004, OSM/VISTAs enlisted 2,784 volunteers who worked 32,727 hours. As a result of their efforts the OSM/VISTA Team was awarded the 2004 Dept. of the Interior Environmental Achievement Award.

Currently, 2 of the 3 AMD&ART staff are members of this team. Dana Zufall, a recent addition to the staff, and

Cindy Wigger (pictured left with members of the OSM/VISTA team) work to find potential solutions for improving water quality while working with local citizens to develop their community. OSM/VISTAs also work to encourage environmental awareness, volunteerism, and practical measures that individuals can take to be a part of the solution.

FOUNDER'S CORNER: COME CELEBRATE!

After ten years of planning and building, we are finally ready to CELEBRATE! the full completion of Vintondale's AMD&ART Park and the success of the community of Vintondale. It all happens July 8 and 9, 2005. We will start with an informal symposium on Vintondale history that will include friends like Brent Glass, former Director of the Pennsylvania History and Museums Commission and now Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History; Alan Berger from the Harvard University

Graduate School of Design; Vintondale's own Denise Scott Weber; and several others, each taking a look at Vintondale and its accomplishment in the AMD&ART park. That evening AMD&ART will hold a special dinner to honor all the AmeriCorps and VISTA workers that have worked with us over all those years.

The next day, Saturday, the fun begins! A parade at 10AM will bring lots of participants to Vintondale, another parade of speakers – local politicians, agency

heads that brought significant dollars to the project and other significant players – will follow the parade in an opening ceremony. Following that there will be concession stands for lunch at the pavilion, tours of the site with AMD&ART current staff and maybe some of the "old timers" as well, and lots of time to reflect on what a great journey these past ten years has been.

We hope you will join us for two days of CELEBRATE! in Vintondale. See you July 8 and 9, 2005!



T. Allan Comp, Founder /Director

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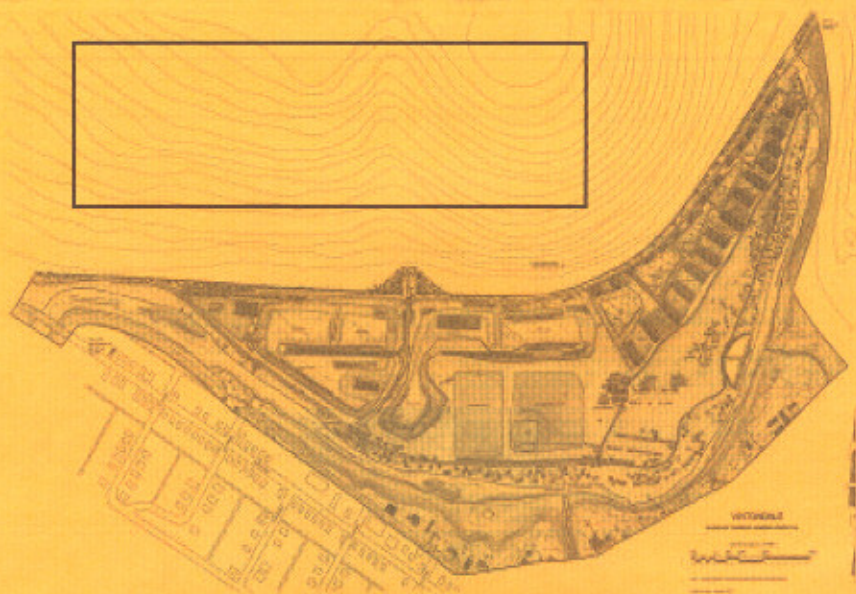
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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.AMDANDART.ORG

TRANSFORMING AN ENVIRONMENTAL
LIABILITY INTO A COMMUNITY ASSET



WHAT'S TO COME...

You're probably thinking, "Gee, there's been so much accomplished what's left to do?" Actually, a lot. With the Vintondale's AMD&ART Park completion scheduled for the end of June, the AMD&ART staff has been very busy making the final arrangements for the Clean Slate Project and The Great Map Project.

The Great Map Project is a mosaic map, the map is taken from the original 1923 Sanborn Insurance map of the site. Framing the mosaic will be black stone tiles etched with pictures to record Vintondale's history.

And, if you have not already done so mark your calendars, your day planners, and your palm pilots for July 8th and 9th for VINTONDALE'S AMD&ART PARK CELEBRATION. Starting at 1:00pm on Friday the 8th, the Celebration weekend will be kicked off with a History Symposium featuring local and nationally renowned speakers to present the idea of AMD&ART in a larger context. The symposium should wrap-up between 5pm and 6pm. On Saturday the 9th there will be a parade starting at 10am followed by an opening ceremony on site with politi-

cal speakers and community events through out the day.

View of Vintondale's
AMD&ART Park from atop
the boney pile.

