

Portage Area Historical Society receives humanities council grant

By **Rebecca D. Richardson**
of Mainline Newspapers

With financial assistance from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, the fifth-grade classes from the Portage Area School District will be on the receiving

end of a hands on history lesson. Irene Huschak, the corresponding secretary for the Portage Area Historical Society, said that the group received a PHC grant to fund a fifth-grade project in the school district.

The grant provides funds to take

the students on a bus ride down Plane #2 of the Allegheny Portage Railroad, stopping along the way to read the historical marker. Plane #2 runs down from Jimtown toward Munster Road in Portage Township. The students will then continue at the Portage Station Museum where they will be able to participate in a discussion of "the Mainline Railroad and its importance to the growth of our nation."

Huschak noted that the Mainline railroad passes just 20 feet from the museum and the students will be able to watch trains pass by from inside the museum or from the recently built viewing platform

or from the front of the museum.

Another aspect of the field trip will be an indepth tour of the Station Museum, which "houses the ticket office, doors, windows, wainscoting, and many other features from the original station."

Finally, students will "listen to songs and stories about the life styles, music, clothing, hobbies and hardships of area children and their parents many decades ago. They will also learn about the importance of the railroad, mines and steel mills to their forefathers."

The field trip will be led by Gregory Zaborowsky, an education specialist for the National

Parks Service at the Allegheny Portage Railroad Historical Site, and by volunteers from the Portage Area Historical Society.

The Historical Society has in place annual programs for grades three and four from the Portage Area Elementary Middle School.