
Volume 2, Issue 1

January 2021

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Mikado #17 sits on the main line in the Rockhill yard with a string of empties. The railroad offered photographers a rare opportunity to take pictures in the snow on December 17th, following a Nor'Easter that hit the area – Bob Airhart photo

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT VAN SCYOC

It has already become something of a cliché to talk about all the bad aspects of 2020 regardless of how numerous and pervasive those bad aspects were. In contrast, for your FEBT 2020 was a banner year; our membership nearly doubled, fundraising is off the charts (or thermometer at least), and more of you came out to volunteer than ever before! While the acquisition of the railroad by the EBT Foundation has spurred much of this excitement, it is all of you who made those accomplishments actually happen.

All indications are that 2021 will only be better than 2020 so I can only imagine what you will accomplish! The momentum will not slow and our close partnership with the EBT Foundation gets stronger each day. We also will work with Railways to Yesterday to further strengthen that relationship too. The three organizations working in unison will truly prove unstoppable.

The future is brighter than ever and I look forward to working with you throughout 2021 and beyond. We have a lot of work to do and I will surely be looking for your help and guidance so please keep tuning in to this newsletter. I hope to see all of you in Rockhill Furnace or Robertsdale this Spring. Until then, stay well and be safe!

Andy Van Scyoc, President
vanscyoc@gmail.com

ROBERTSDALE WAS A BUSY PLACE IN 2020

Dear Robertsdale,

Telly Savalas used to say, “Who loves ya, baby?” Evidently the answer is, “lots of people.” During 2020 there have been over 22 work sessions in Robertsdale. Two were back in the winter, prior to the news of the sale. All the rest have been after the August 2 stakeholder meeting. Note that I wrote “over 22”. The track crew guys are clearly from the “Git ‘er done” school of work but not so big on recordkeeping. I know that they were there at least twice, probably more, and none of them signed in. There were probably 5 or 6 guys and they probably spent 6 hours each. So, bump my numbers appropriately. Oh, and don’t forget the crew that moved the hoppers, who also gave no record of their numbers or time.

Twenty-two work sessions in which 15 people spent 446.75 hours working. I will highlight Bill Reynolds, who spent 130 hours working. Do some math and you’ll realize he invested 3¼ 40-hour work weeks on your museum. For the group as a whole, that’s over 11 40-hour work weeks invested! I’m so impressed at the response to our calls for volunteers. The excitement felt in Rockhill/Orbisonia clearly carries up and down the entire line.

On behalf of FEBT, our thanks to: Bill Adams, Frank Benenati, Jane Clarke, Steve Del Signor, Brad Esposito, John Hasty, Mark Reese, Bill Reynolds, Ryan Rimshaw, Lizbeth Skeim, Jerry Skeim, Andy Van Scyoc, Gene Tucker (AKA Friar Tuck), and Charlie Wootton and those others who also helped.

What did that get you? All doors in the old post office have been replaced. Yes, there’s still some trim work to be done on them, but they are all in place. The museum store has been moved from the station to the luxurious new location in the old post office. The warehoused copies of *Timber Transfer* have been moved to the 2nd floor of the old post office, cataloged, organized, labeled.

The 2nd floor reading room has 228 books, magazines, brochures, plans, maps, blueprints, EBT forms that you can read. (Want to know the correct whistle signal for your sound equipped locomotive? Come read the 1937 East Broad Top Railroad and C. Co. Operating Department Rules.) Also there are 122 photographs you can look through (all donated by Doug Taylor), and we still have room for your donations...



I suppose that while reading you'll want a nice chair, table and reading lamp. These items were donated by Mark Reese (2 chairs actually).

The railroad donated 3 hopper cars and FEBT had them moved to the restored scale track near the station. The mainline track was cleared back to mine #1. Want to see a really creative "bridge"? Come look at how Friar Tuck bridged the small creek right near the station.

Some might say, "Much of what you listed was just moved from the station, so there's not really any gain." I'm glad you brought that up, because it's not true. Long-term plans call for the station to be restored to common carrier days condition. All these materials had to be removed in order to achieve that goal.

And that gets me to a topic that's going to be hard for some of us to adjust to. The biggest single change, the biggest impact to the Robertsdale Museum Complex is this. Up to now, it's been a warehouse, a work site, a place where anything that might someday be of use can be put. That's not true anymore. Starting now, we must think of it as a museum that's open to the public. The floors must be clear of tripping hazards. Items must be labeled in a way that tells their story. Aisleways must be wide enough for unsteady walkers to safely move around. When work is done, it must be completely cleared up at the end of the day.



We are still in need of volunteer hosts. (Pete, are you an idiot? There's a Pandemic! Well, I may be an idiot, but not in this case. I'm looking for folks to let me know they will be willing – once it's safe.) Everything you've read up to here is worthless unless we are open. We cannot open unless you join Mike Zitzmann and volunteer to host once it's safe to open. Also, we still looking for donations of books; I bet there are plenty of books and magazines we don't yet have. So please continue to think of what you can offer to support your Robertsdale Museum.

I'm easy to reach, email me at febt@aol.com or write me at the address that's in every *TT*.

Jane and I are really looking forward to 2021 and seeing you at the museum in Robertsdale. – Pete Clarke

Robertsdale, looking south from Main St. Above on August 21st after some clearing, and below on December 26th with hoppers in place – Jane Clarke photos

2021 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN SURPASSES GOAL!

You did it!

The Friends of the East Broad Top set an aggressive goal of \$78,000 for our 2021 fundraising campaign, targeting four urgently needed projects in support of the rebirth of the EBT.

And with the help of 268 individual donors and a generous matching grant, we reached that goal and kept right on going!

An additional \$43,051 has been received between Nov. 22 and Dec. 21 from the stalwart supporters whose names accompany this article. That brings the campaign total to

\$80,793

Our tracking thermometer has had to be redrawn to show it bursting its top!

On behalf of the Friends of the East Broad Top and the EBT Foundation, thank you, thank you, thank you for this fantastic response. Your support and your confidence for our work are deeply appreciated.

Watch this newsletter in the coming year to follow the projects you have supported as they move ahead to completion. On the strength of the early results, we are already talking to contractors for the Rockhill storehouse and the Robertsdale depot roof.

A combined list of all campaign donors will appear in the February newsletter.

And thank you again.

There are several ways to donate. Donations can be made online at <https://febt.org/donate/> using the Company Store portion of the website, which accepts credit cards and PayPal payment methods to contribute. Donations may also be made by mailing a check, payable to FEBT, to:

FEBT Fundraising Treasurer
C/O Ray Davidowski
P.O. Box 81
Sarver, PA 16055

2021 Fundraising Goal:

\$78,000

December Donations:

\$43,051

Campaign Progress:

\$80,793 – 103.6%

Remember, the sooner we receive your contribution and reach our goal, the sooner the professional contractors can be engaged to do their part of the work. Thank you for your continued support.

December Donors list*:

Daniel M. Abbott	Walter Albers	Keith Allen	Larry E. Altoff
Harry Anderson	James B. Armstrong	John J. Atherton	Andrew J. Austin
Herbert E. Baer	Ron Baile	Alexander Bailor	Charles S. Bender
Lawrence E. Biemiller	John Biemiller	Bruce Bowie	Fred S. Breimyer
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Ernest Buyok	Larry Card	Wayne Cass	Matthew V. Cesare
Steven M. Chorkawy	Hal Clawson	Craig & Jill Confair	Roger Cook
Gene Coppinger	Richard C. Cordts	Jan Crane	Alfred DiCenso
Bradley Dobbins	George Dolan	Leo F. Drager	Tommy Duncan
Edmonds Family	Thomas H. Eikerenkotter	Lawrence P. Endler	Thomas A. Ennis

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Ronald L. Pearson	Robert Pearson	John J. Perry	Spencer Pfrogner
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Ernest L. Ross	Russell Rudolph	Norman R. Runk	Richard G. Rutledge
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Eric Schmincke	Raymond E. Schmitt	Donald F. Schultz	Robert Sembach
James W. Seville	Jerome A. Shaver	Robert Sher	Ira Silverman
Sharon Snyder	John R. Snyder	Carl Soechtig	Tom Stackhouse
Robert Stauffer	Gilbert Sterner	Clay Sutton	Douglas C. Taylor
John E. Tietjen	David G. Trussell	Gene R. Tucker	Richard Ullery
William M. Ulrich	David A. Watts	Carleton W. Weber	William T. Wheeler
David S. Whitaker	Sandy & Ted Wiese	Sam W. Wilder	Doris Williams
Kenneth W. Willis	Scarlett Wirt	Richard E. Wiswesser	Brian Wolfe
Adam Wright	Patrick J. Yough	Alfred F. Zollers	

* - All donors listed represent donations received between November 22 and December 21, 2020. Donations received after December 21 will be reported in the February 2021 issue due to press time constraints.

** - Due to abnormal postal service delays, some donations mailed after December 1st may not be accounted for in this reporting. Any donations sent in but not accounted for in this reporting will be noted in the February 2021 issue. Please allow 2-4 weeks for any checks to clear before contacting the Treasurer.

- Ray Davidowski and Lee Rainey

COMPANY STORE ITEM OF THE MONTH

New: 2021 FEBT Wall Calendar!



Featuring the stunning photography of master lensman Matthew Malkiewicz, this magnificent calendar includes a different, seasonally-appropriate color or black-and-white image for every month.

The stapled wall calendar opens to 11" x 17" and is printed on heavy stock with room to enter appointments.

VIRTUAL REUNION SPECIAL: Still only \$15* each, and shipping is free in the U.S. since you can't pick it up in person!

*Sorry, no member discount on this item.

Check out our Christmas sale in the Company Store, febt.org website, Facebook and other social media! Pennsylvania residents, please add 6% sales tax. The most convenient way to order is through the FEBT Company Store website at the URL store.FEBT.org. We accept PayPal, credit cards, checks, and money orders. You may also contact the store by paper mail at FEBT Company Store, 19 W. Vandevender Street, Mount Union, PA 17066.

TRACK WORK RECAP 2020

The transition from the old year to the new offers an excellent opportunity to look back at the work and the accomplishments of FEBT's efforts to assist the East Broad Top Foundation's work to rebuild and rehabilitate the trackage in and around the property in 2020.

Much of our work this year has focused on rehabilitation of the tracks in the Rockhill yard. It's fair to say that, in the wake of our efforts, much of what we've devoted our time and attention to hasn't looked as good as it does now in many a year.

Our first work session took place in March, following the announcement that the EBT Foundation had purchased the railroad. We tended to switch work that first weekend, a task that has continued to draw much of our focus as the year unfolded.

As the year progressed, our partnership with the Foundation's fulltime track crew grew. We've worked alongside them in work on the main line north of Rockhill, and we've worked in tandem with them, completing projects that were started during the week. Our goal is to supplement the staff's work, to tackle projects that might otherwise take them away from the pressing work of rebuilding the main north of town, and to fill in where needed.

In September and October, we turned our attention to work in Robertsdale. Initially, about a quarter mile of the track south of the Robertsdale station was cleared of vegetation by a crew, which was led by Ryan Rimshaw. After that, we were able to install some ties in the main track, with a goal of making the track usable for handcar and speeder operation at some point in the future. Then, we reconstructed the scale track adjacent to the station, extending that track over 100 feet. Once the reconstruction was complete, three hoppers were placed on the track just south of the station.

In the fall, we began to offer midweek and weekend work sessions in addition to the FEBT's regularly scheduled sessions. Charlie Wootton has been instrumental in drafting Signup Genius notifications for these sessions. Whenever the FEBT is active on the railroad's property, we draft a report for the Foundation's General Manager, Brad Esposito, at the end of every work day, outlining what has been accomplished, what the status is of work that hasn't been completed, and if the track is capable of being used.



The FEBT track crew poses with the M-3 after restoring the track to its home in November 2020 – Gene Tucker photo

Looking forward, we can say that an enormous amount of work has been accomplished in the year now past, not only by the FEBT's track forces, but by others in FEBT and by the railroad's staff. Much remains to be done, of course. To that end, we will continue to offer midweek and weekend work sessions in addition to the regularly scheduled sessions. We endeavor to offer two days, back-to-back, so as to better allow the many personnel who come a long distance to lend their assistance. We invite any FEBT member to be involved. We'll never ask anyone to do anything that is beyond their capability. We have an enormous amount of fun (if you join us, please be prepared to bring a joke or a story, we could use some new material!). And, at the end of the day, we have the immense satisfaction of seeing the results of our hard work, knowing that our efforts have aided in the restoration of this priceless gem of a railroad for future generations to experience and enjoy.

TRACKWORK BOX SCORE
North of Rockhill, track restoration work is now complete to Horne's Valley, 2.4 miles from the Orbisonia depot.

We have an enormous amount of fun (if you join us, please be prepared to bring a joke or a story, we could use some new material!). And, at the end of the day, we have the immense satisfaction of seeing the results of our hard work, knowing that our efforts have aided in the restoration of this priceless gem of a railroad for future generations to experience and enjoy.

A great year lies in front of us, and a very productive year is now behind us. The great, good things that have taken place in that old year are directly due to the participation and efforts of each person who's joined us trackside. To each one, we say "thank you!". – *Gene Tucker (AKA "Friar Tuck")*

EDITORIAL – WHAT A YEAR, IN SPITE OF COVID

2020 has been a crazy year in a lot of ways. For the East Broad Top Railroad and the Friends of the East Broad Top, it has been crazy in a good way. The Valentine's Day announcement of the railroad's sale jumpstarted a lot of activity along the line. The new ownership group clearly had a plan and financial support to carry out a number of tasks. The EBT Foundation, with a lot of help from FEBT members, got the railroad operating for revenue service for two different events. Aside from these excursion trips, a lot happened in continued restoration efforts.

FEBT members continued work on restoring Box Car 174. Steel replacement work was done on the north end of the car, and the south end was checked for what needed to be replaced. This project was set aside, however, after the February sale of the railroad. Don't worry, we will get back to it. The car still needs plenty of work. Stable buildings and functional track just became higher priorities with the intent to hold shop tours and reopen the line.

A project that will be getting a higher priority is the restoration of Combine 14. Still sitting in the paint shop, the car is getting closer to being fully restored. The old interior paint has been removed, and a lot of woodwork has been replaced inside the car. As Charlie Wootton reported at the Fall Reunion, it is pretty much just a matter of reassembling everything. This car will be in demand for the regular tourist operations coming in 2021.

Several socially distanced volunteers cleaned up the debris that had riddled Track 3 at the Coal Tipple at the south end of the Rockhill yard. Phase 2 of the Coal Tipple restoration is on the docket for 2021. As you read above, the funding for this has already been secured thanks to the many gracious donors who have contributed over the last three months.

A ton of work was performed in and around the shops complex. FEBT volunteers relocated several machines and stored materials and removed flooring to allow for the EBT Foundation's contracting of Woodford Brothers to stabilize the structure. Then after Woodford Brothers was done, FEBT crews put all the equipment back where it was supposed to be. New flooring was placed in the boiler house, exterior walls were painted, the roof was repaired, and new gutters and downspouts were installed. So much work was done on this complex that I probably forgot to list something here. Preserving this complex is of the utmost importance to maintaining the history in Rockhill, and this project proved to be a greatly successful collaboration between FEBT and EBTf.

FEBT track crews worked alongside the railroad's employees in restoring a lot of trackage. FEBT members worked some portions of the main line, but mostly concentrated on work in the Rockhill yard area. They rebuilt the coach track, the paint shop lead, the roundhouse lead, the spur into the engine shop, the spur to the electrical shop where the M-3 resides, Track 3 from the switch off the main at Blacklog Creek to where it joins the north leg of the wye to the Shade Gap branch, some portions of the north wye leg, the scale track at Robertsdale, the three-way switch at the south end of the yard, and

I'm sure several other areas. Countless ties, tie plates, and spikes were installed, and tons and tons of ballast was spread by these folks. The track crews went and worked extra days that weren't even scheduled work session days in their dedication to these portions of the overall track restoration goal. This a major accomplishment for our crews and for the EBT.

All of this progress is fueled by two things; membership and donations. Membership in 2020 has swelled from 757 on January 1st to 1400 active members today! News of the railroad's sale has brought out a huge amount of the most important type of donation; one's time. Work sessions have been attended in record numbers. Thank you to everyone who spent any time at the railroad helping out, or helped remotely.

Every bit of something helps to get these goals accomplished. Money came in to fund the projects too. The 2020 portion (January thru September) of the 2020 Fundraising Campaign brought in \$42,447.42. As you read above, the first quarter of the 2021 campaign nearly doubled that amount!! A total of \$123,240.42 has been brought in to help preserve, restore, and interpret the East Broad Top. The entire organization and the EBT are grateful for your contributions.

MEMBERSHIP BOX SCORE

The Friends of the East Broad Top is up to

1400

active members



I mentioned that the EBT ran revenue passenger trains for the first time since 2011 this year. The two events were the 60th Anniversary of tourist operations in August, and Christmas in Coal Country the first two weekends in December. For the August event, the M-7 pulled trains from Orbisonia station north to the Enyart Road grade crossing. The Christmas in Coal Country is a major expansion of the annual Santa's Trolley event that the Rockhill Trolley Museum has held for decades. It featured a train ride behind the M-7 north from the station to the grade crossing on McMullen's Summit. The trackwork progress is amazing in and of itself, but the joy of smelling the burning coal stove in a warm, narrow gauge caboose on a cold day was a thrill that is hard to replicate away from the East Broad Top. I took the wife and kids with me for the Christmas in Coal Country, and a good time was had by all. It was a great event for my youngest to have her first train ride. Both events included a trolley ride out to Blacklog Narrows and back after the train ride. Many thanks to the FEBT and Railways to Yesterday members who conducted the trains and operated the trolleys for these events.

The Christmas in Coal Country train sits festively on the north leg of the Rockhill wye on December 5th – Doug Davenport photo



Left: Car 172, the original Santa's Trolley, sits at Altoff Siding on the former Shade Gap branch of the EBT. Right: Every child's favorite FEBT member, Santa, stands on the south platform of Coach 20 during the first ever Christmas in Coal Country event. The coach was placed on Track 6 of the Rockhill yard, and allowed Santa to take gift requests from a safe social distance. – Doug Davenport photos

2020 in East Broad Top terms has been that crazy in a good way. I think the non-EBT things in life have most of us looking forward to the end of 2020 more than the arrival of the new year. I think there is a lot of positives to take away if you look for them though, and everything going on here is certainly one big thing that went well. I'm excited going into 2021 for all the good things to look forward to in the Aughwick Valley.



The Meadow St. Platform of the Rockhill Trolley Museum is illuminated with Christmas lights during the Christmas in Coal Country event – Doug Davenport photo

UPCOMING EVENTS

The 2021 Rockhill work session calendar is planned as noted below. All dates are tentative and subject to change due to weather, railroad operations, and governmental restrictions. You can view the most up to date information at <https://febt.org/volunteer/>. Please also stay tuned for emails from the various project leaders for when they ask for help. The 2021 Robertsedale schedule is still in production, and will be made available once finalized.

January 8, 9, 10
February 20, 21
March 13, 14
April 10, 11
May 1, 2
May 22, 23
May 24-28 Work Week
June 12, 13
July 10, 11
July 31, August 1
August 21, 22
September 4, 5
September 20-24 Work Week
October 8, 9, 10 Reunion
November 6, 7

FEBT BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS

The 2021 nominating committee is now accepting nominations for the 2021 Board of Directors election. Randy Lehrian is chairing the committee.

The board establishes policies for the organization and prepares and approves the annual budget. In addition, members may serve on committees that meet in person or by conference call. Members serve two-year terms.

If you are interested in learning more about running for the board yourself, or if you would like to suggest someone to the committee as a possible nominee, please contact Randy Lehrian by February 28, 2021 at randy.lehrian@gmail.com.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Friends of the East Broad Top Newsletter is a monthly digital-only periodical. Started in 2020, it is intended to keep members and donors apprised of what the organization has done and will be doing. The FEBT Newsletter is distributed by email to the current list of members and donors, and is a privilege of contributing to the FEBT's cause of preserving, restoring, and interpreting the East Broad Top Railroad for current and future generations. The editor can be contacted at febtnews@yahoo.com. Press time for information submitted is 8:00 PM Eastern time on the 25th of each month. Events occurring after the 25th, such as donations and memberships, will be considered part of the following month's information.