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Volume 3, Issue 3

March 2022

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*Mikado No. 12 appears to be under steam on the Rockhill Yard turntable during the night photo shoot as part of the Winter Spectacular Night Photo Shoot, held Friday evening February 18<sup>th</sup>. – Gorman Findley photo +*

# FEBT, ROBERTSDALE OPO WIN PRESERVATION AWARD

The Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce and the Huntingdon County Planning Commission have chosen the Robertsdale Old Post Office as a recipient of the 2021 Huntingdon County Community Improvement Award in the preservation category. The preservation award is for restoration, preservation, and/or rehabilitation of buildings of all types to retain historic character. This award is being given to the Friends of the East Broad Top for their efforts to restore and reuse a local historic landmark, and to demonstrate the importance of Robertsdale and its mines during the heyday of the East Broad Top Railroad and Coal Company.



*The Robertsdale Old Post Office building, now the FEBT Museum, sits in the Company Square. The new roof on the Robertsdale Depot and the greenness of the trees date this photo to be September 2021. – Pete Clake photo*

## WINTER SPECTACULAR PHOTO CONTEST RESULTS

For the second consecutive year, this newsletter requested your photos of the Winter Spectacular. As always, the call was answered by the membership. Any photo captions noted with a plus sign (+) after the photographer's name is a contest submission photo. Changing weather patterns throughout the day, and the addition of the photo shoot the night before, provided diverse backdrops to create a lot of variety this year. Thank you to all who emailed in your artwork. – Doug Davenport



# FEBRUARY FUNDRAISING UPDATE

29 donations summing over \$7,000 were received in February. We are well over the fundraising goal for the year due to your generosity. As warmer weather breaks, stay tuned for updates on how your donated dollars are spent to preserve, restore, and interpret the East Broad Top Railroad.

## 2022 Fundraising Goal:

\$100,000

## February Donations:

\$7,355.00

## Campaign Total:

\$215,220.50 – 215.2%

February donors\*:

Reginald Arford  
Alexander Bowser  
Gene Coppinger  
Lance Erickson  
Dave Johnson  
Donald Lotz  
Joseph Rizzotti  
Brian Wolfe

James Armstrong  
Robert Brewster  
Beth & Bruce Courter  
Doug Fink  
Victor V. Kidd  
Irvine G. Milheim  
David Rose

Ronald Batory  
Tim Bristow  
Thomas S. Dix  
John A. Gummo  
Stephen Knaze  
Jim Perry & Ann Mason  
Robert Sembach

Vincent Bellafore  
Wayne Carr  
William J. Donall  
Jerry M. Hurt  
Byron Locke  
Thomas L. Tallentire

\* - All donors listed represent donations received between January 22, 2022 and February 21, 2022. Donations received after February 21 will be reported in the April 2022 issue due to press time constraints.

- Ray Davidowski and Doug Davenport



*Two infrequently operated pieces of equipment pause in Rockhill, as the Liberty Liner disembarks passengers while the M-1 and Caboose 28 do the same. The event drew a sizable crowd, and they had a variety of Rockhill Trolley Museum trolleys to choose from, as can be seen in the background. – Joel Salomon photo +*



*Two pictures showing the drastically different weather conditions throughout the day.*

*Left: The M-1 awaits its next departure from Orbisonia Station. Sam Painter photo +*

*Below: The M-3 sits on the main line in front of the station as a snow squall passes through the Aughwick Valley – Simon Miller photo +*

## VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED

As we approach warm weather and the 2022 operating season, our need for volunteers to support the many planned FEBT activities and projects will continue to grow. Please consider if you can help this year with the preservation and rebirth of the EBT by volunteering at any of the activities in Robertsdale or Rockhill Furnace, or by helping with other FEBT functions. A great place to start is by visiting the Volunteer page on our FEBT website:

<https://febt.org/volunteer/>. This page describes the FEBT volunteer experience, includes the latest work session schedules, and has contact info for the Rockhill and Robertsdale Restoration Coordinators.



Please note that no particular skills are needed to contribute, just an interest in restoring the EBT. You can apply the skills you have and learn new ones from experienced volunteers. If you would like to help with any FEBT project, have questions about volunteering, or have suggestions for our volunteer recruiting efforts, please email me at [dbulman115@gmail.com](mailto:dbulman115@gmail.com). – Dave Bulman



# NEW COMPANY STORE FULFILLMENT MANAGER

We are introducing John Quinn as the new Order Fulfillment Manager for the FEBT Company Store. John is replacing Wade Woodcock who served as the Fulfillment Manager for 5 years. Wade did a wonderful job, but his physical health did not allow him to continue. Wade has graciously agreed to continue as our Modeling Consultant, and we are grateful for his help in that position. See the following paragraphs for the new store address, and John's introduction. – *Dick Ullery*

The new address for the Company Store is:

John Quinn  
121 Chester Dr. #215  
Pine Grove Mills, PA USA 16868-0215

I was introduced to steam locomotives and the EBT in the 1970's by my father while growing up in the Philadelphia area. Years later, in the late 1980's after moving to Maryland from California, we introduced our children to the EBT and made frequent stops on the way to and from Penn State games. I was thrilled to hear in February 2020 that the EBT had been purchased and was coming back to life. With my retirement coming up, I knew that the time was right to volunteer and do what I could to help. I joined FEBT in April 2020 and attended a couple of work weekends, working on a brush clearing and painting crew.

As a member of Father Gene Tucker's congregation in Huntingdon I was drawn to help him with track work (despite the fact that I knew nothing about it) and I wound up coming an average of once a week from May 2020 to October 2021 to work on track work, and to be mentored by Friar Tuck and his band of merry trackmen. During that time, I worked extensively with the full-time crew and also on many Saturdays of work weekends. I fully retired in November 2021 and I was looking for ways that I could help more when I saw Andy's appeal for a FEBT store inventory manager and volunteered.

I enjoy photography and videography and my subject of choice is steam locomotives. I have a Facebook page and a YouTube channel of my work. Since becoming empty nesters my wife and I have been on many trips and photo-shoots to photograph and video steam locomotives in the East, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and a few in Canada, with the goal to eventually find and photograph every operating steam locomotive in the US and Canada. – *John Quinn*



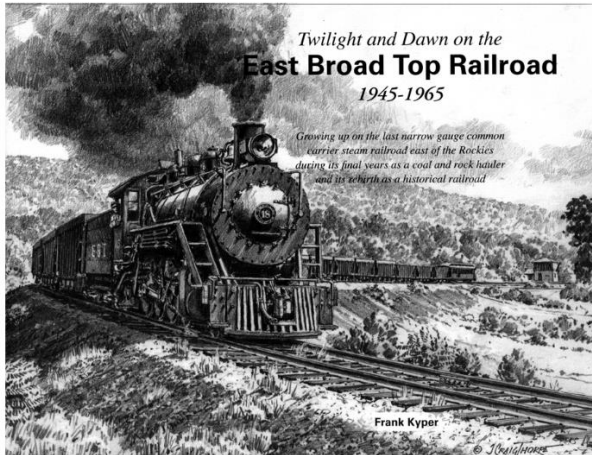
*Photo of John Quinn. – Dick Ullery collection*



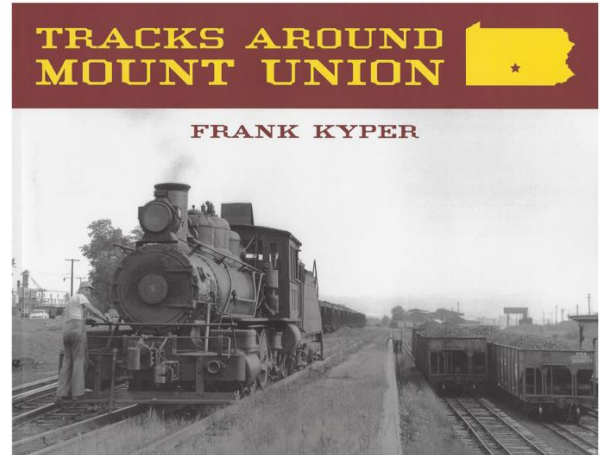
*Courtney Brown operates the M-1 up the grade to McMullen's Summit. – Craig Confair photo +*

## COMPANY STORE ITEM OF THE MONTH

### Back in Stock! Two EBT Classics by Frank Kyper



Paperback, 112 pages



Paperback, 134 pages

\$50 each. (FEBT members get a 15% discount on books.) Shipping for 1 book \$7.50, for both books \$11.25.

The most convenient way to order is through the FEBT Company Store website at [store.febt.org](http://store.febt.org). We accept PayPal and credit cards. You can also make donations and pay your annual membership dues through the Company Store website. You may also contact the store by paper mail at FEBT Company Store, 121 Chester Drive. #215, Pine Grove Mills, PA USA 16868-0215.



*Sparks fly from the cut-off saw as track bolts are replaced. – Matthew Malkiewicz photo*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

| Date                      | Host    | Event   |
|---------------------------|---------|---|
| March 5, 6                | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| April 2, 3                | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| April 9, 10               | EBT/RTM | Easter on the Rails                                 |
| April 23, 24              | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| May 7                     | BTACMHS | Broad Top Area Coal Miners Museum Grand Reopening   |
| May 14, 15                | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| May 21, 22                | EBT     | EBT Goes to War!                                    |
| May 23-27                 | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Week Session                          |
| June 4, 5                 | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| June 11, 12               | RTM     | Johnstown Car Weekend                               |
| June 25, 26               | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| July 16, 17               | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| July 16                   | RTM     | Trolleys and Ice Cream!                             |
| August 13, 14             | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| August 13, 14             | RTM     | First Day Celebration                               |
| August 17, 18, 19, 20     | EBT/RTM | Orbisonia/Rockhill Homecoming                       |
| September 3, 4            | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| September 9, 10, 11       | EBT     | Orbisonia Antique Power Show                        |
| September 10              | RTM     | Car Cruise-In and Movies!                           |
| September 17              | EBT     | First Responder Day                                 |
| September 17              | RTM     | Searching for Sasquatch                             |
| September 19-23           | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Week Session                          |
| October 7, 8, 9           | FEBT    | FEBT Fall Reunion                                   |
| October 8                 | RTM     | Fall Spectacular                                    |
| October 8, 9              | BTACMHS | Robertsdale Community Days/Coal Miner Heritage Days |
| October 15, 16, 22, 23    | EBT/RTM | Pumpkin Festival                                    |
| October 22                | RTM     | Phantom Trolley                                     |
| November 5, 6             | FEBT    | Rockhill Work Session                               |
| November 25, 26, 27       | EBT/RTM | Christmas in Coal Country                           |
| December 2-4, 9-11, 16-18 | EBT/RTM | Christmas in Coal Country                           |

Hosts: FEBT  
EBT  
RTM  
BTACMHS

Friends of the East Broad Top  
East Broad Top Railroad  
Rockhill Trolley Museum  
Broad Top Area Coal Miners Historical Society

[www.febt.org](http://www.febt.org)  
[www.eastbroadtop.com](http://www.eastbroadtop.com)  
[www.rockhilltrolley.org](http://www.rockhilltrolley.org)  
[broadtopminersmuseum.com](http://broadtopminersmuseum.com)

## MEMBERSHIP BOX SCORE

The Friends of the East Broad Top  
membership is up to  
**1661**



# VOLUNTEER PROFILE

## Six Questions for... David Dietz

For years now David Dietz has been among FEBT's most reliable — and cheerful — volunteers. He's a regular at Rockhill Furnace work sessions, but has also helped in Robertsdale. And after he was part of a Boiler Rats crew that put new posts under the Rockhill Freight Office, he salvaged several of the original posts to slice up and make into clocks for sale in the gift shop. Now retired — he was a production supervisor in an electronics factory — he lives outside of Alexandria, PA, about 45 minutes away from Rockhill Furnace.

We interviewed him last month at the Bricktown Model Railroaders Association, where he's also very active: He was in the process of installing models of the underpasses that take Jefferson and Division Streets under the former Pennsylvania Railroad main line in Mount Union. At home, he has a "generic" HO layout in the basement. In the back yard is a 15-inch gauge line with wooden rail, the Sassafras Gulch Lumber Company Railroad. It runs 400 feet from his sawmill to his woodshop, with homemade ride-on equipment.

### How did you get interested in the East Broad Top?

I've been in the Huntingdon area all my life. Sometime in the '80s I started taking my kids on rides at the EBT, and then I took all my grandkids on rides. I like steam engines — you can watch them work.

I joined the Friends sometime about '87. Later I was at one of the Fall Spectaculars and Steve Jacobs was standing there looking at Hopper 802. He said, "I'm gonna rebuild that." I said, "That sounds like fun." I started volunteering the next year.

### Is there anything you've learned while volunteering for the FEBT that you never imagined yourself learning?

I built my dad a barn and I built my house. When we built my dad's barn, we went out on his property, cut the trees down, sawed the lumber, and built the barn. That's scratch building, 12 inches to the foot, and that's how I learned to build things. But then I got involved in Rockhill, and whatever needed done, I was in there doing. I've used a torch a little bit, cut a little metal. Used the plasma cutter. Drilled an awful lot of holes. Pounded out rivets after Steve or Charlie Wootton burnt the heads off.



### Is there an FEBT project you're particularly proud of?

Saving all those buildings and stopping the roofs from leaking. I'm a little bit afraid of heights, but I'd rather be up there than down below watching some idiot that doesn't know what he's doing.

### Is there an FEBT volunteer you particularly admire?

Charlie. He does it all. If he doesn't know how to do something, he figures it out.

### Is there an aspect of the EBT you especially look forward to seeing restored?

I want to ride Combine 14 to Robertsdale. Not just to Colgate Grove — I want to ride it to Robertsdale. And that's not too farfetched now. The question is, I'm 80. Will I live long enough?

The foundation is what all of us loyal volunteers who worked through all the lean years prayed for. There are a few things I have mixed emotions about, like I spent a lot of time working on Combine 14's trucks. Now Brad Esposito's buying new trucks for it instead of putting the old ones back under. He can spend less money on



new trucks, if he buys a number of them at the same time, than it would cost to put the new wheels on the axles for the old trucks. From a financial point of view, I understand it, but I have mixed emotions.

### **What are your favorite railroads?**

The EBT's first, then the Pennsy. Durango & Silverton and Cumbres & Toltec — you have to mention them. And I rode the Georgetown Loop. There in the early '90s I was spending two or three weeks in the summers driving five or six thousand miles all over the west. You know how many national parks there are in southern Utah? I think seven. I had to do something for my wife besides ride trains.



*Steve Jacobs, Dave Dietz, and Chris Coleman by the Paint Shop in 2020. – Lawrence Biemiller photo*

– Lawrence Biemiller



*What lies beyond here? A view north from the current end of restored trackage between Colgate Grove and Shirleysburg. – Adam Wright photo +*





*A snow-covered speeder crew and passengers return from a run during the 2022 Winter Spectacular – Craig Confair photo +*

## **FEBRUARY ROCKHILL FURNACE WORK SESSION**

We had a dozen volunteers turn out for the work weekend in Rockhill Furnace on February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Work focused on combine 14 in the paint shop. Progress included window installation, roof stapling and trimming, paint prep, and interior trim finishing.

Work also continued in the Storehouse. Reinstallation of the first floor wall storage bins required measuring and trimming of the original bins to fit into the rebuilt building structure, followed by heavy lifting to place the bin sections in place. By the end of the weekend, the last of the four bin sections were back in place. – *Dave Bulman*



*An M-1 caboose hop trip returns from Colgate Grove in the snow, as seen from the second story of Orbisonia Station. – Sam Painter photo +*



# RECAPPING FEBT'S FIRST TWO YEARS OF TRACK WORK

Many who are connected to the East Broad Top Railroad are aware that the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of construction of the railroad is upcoming this September. It's hard to imagine that those who constructed the line in a period of over two years accomplished what they did at the time, given the means they had available. Construction lasted from September 1872 to October 1874.

Over the past two years, since the FEBT's first work party in March 2020, following the announcement of the railroad's purchase by the East Broad Top Foundation, the FEBT's track gang has done its best to bond with those track workers of old, using the very same methods, oftentimes, to assist in the rebuilding of the EBT's trackage: We've swung spike mauls (no need to keep one's appointment with the therapist at the end of a day doing that); we've tamped ties with a pick (a true instrument of torture!); we've regulated ballast with carts; we've dug out and installed ties by hand (yes, even including thirteen foot headblock ties in switches); we've nursed stub switches in the yard back to health; we've cut out bolts with a track chisel (try it sometime, the modern methods are much better!); we've tightened or replaced nearly every bolt in the track now in use; and we've removed steel ties in places where the track has been rebuilt, making their presence unnecessary (many of those which were removed were installed in the track leading south from the Rockhill yard, enabling speeder runs to PA Route 475).

We've also been active in Robertsedale, installing ties so as to correct the gauge so that the handcar can make use of the first one-quarter mile of track south from the station, and we rebuilt the track adjacent to the station where the three hopper cars sit.

In carrying out this work, we've bonded with those track workers of old, sharing the track environment with the same challenges they did: We've worked in good weather and in bad; in frozen and unfrozen precipitation; and we've shared the track environment with some of God's critters like hornets and yellowjackets and with snakes (harmful and nonharmful varieties).

It's impossible to name the hundreds of those who built the railroad originally, but we're fortunate to be able to give credit and thanks to those who've assisted in this work over the past two years. Those named here range in track

experience from many years' track work in other places, to those who'd never worked track before (we are always eager to train!), to those in between. General Manager of the railroad, Brad Esposito, dubbed this bunch "Gene's Army". Another term for this assemblage might be "Tucker's Health Club". However it's known, it's a mighty force for good at the railroad. Here are the names of those who've lent their efforts to the work over the past two years: Alex Cook, Bill Reynolds, Charlie Wootten, Chris Hohman, Chris Wenger, Craig Confair, Craig Musser, David Dillow, Damion Geist (new), Dan Horting, Daniel Lane, Dave Wagner, Dave Hart, David Syiek, Dave Zinni, Ed Kompare, Garrett McCabe,



*A track crew member uses a cut-off saw to remove track bolts to allow for their replacement in the Rockhill Yard area in February 2022. – Matthew Malkiewicz photo*

Henry Long Jr., James Somerville, Jerry Skeim, Jerry Bertoldo, Joel Myers, John Langan, John Quinn, John Schrufer, Jonathan Morningstar, Josh Capp, Justin Santichen, Larry Altoff, Larry Fuchs, Mark Reese, Mark & Julie Sanfilippo, Matt Stark, Melanie Sembrat, Phil Coyle, Jack Demnyan, Roger Stier, Ross Brown, Ryan Rimshaw, Todd Johnson, Tom Jordan, Tom Permon, Trevor Labor, Victor Booth, Wayne Cass, Wayne Wanzor, and Zac Reitmeyer. That's over forty names. (I pray no one was omitted, and that all the names are correctly spelled!)

Our goals in carrying out all this work are simple and straightforward: 1. To be an asset to the East Broad Top Foundation, to the railroad's staff (all of them), and to the FEBT; 2. To boost and augment the efforts at restoration of the railroad; and 3. To make the full-timers look good (we work alongside them and at their direction).

We invite you to join us. We have lots of fun, we work hard, and there is no shortage of smiles and amusing stories trackside as we put our shoulders to the work at hand. – *Gene Tucker*



*Snow comes down upon the Winter Spectacular as the EBT's M-1 returns to Orbisonia Station and prepares to cross Meadow St., and Johnstown Traction trolley 311 of the Rockhill Trolley Museum heads outbound around the Museum Curve to traverse the former Shade Gap Branch of the East Broad Top. – Craig Confair photo +*



## ROBERTSDALE NOTES

We've added one more host since the February newsletter went out! He lives in Fairfax VA. He wonders if anyone along his route might have been deterred from volunteering because of the long drive. So, if you live near Fairfax VA, along the Beltway, I-270 up to Hagerstown and have been holding back because of the drive, let me know and I'll put you two in touch.



*A view of the north end of the Robertsdale Yard, illustrating the runaway track. In the distance, the girder of Bridge No. 13 is visible, crossing Trough Creek. – Pete Clarke*

We need you to volunteer to join our group of hosts. The “other guy” can’t do it, it’s up to you.

Because I have little to write this month, perhaps a picture will help make you realize that you want to be in Robertsdale. See the attached photo. It shows the north end of the Robertsdale yard. We all (?) know that the scale at the Robertsdale station did not have a “by-pass track”, so no locomotive could ever run across it. The track was slightly down grade, so they just had a car man ride the loaded hopper and use the car’s brakes to stop it on the scale, then release the brakes and let it roll across the street into the yard. At that point they would tighten the brakes again and walk back up to get the next car. Railroad car brakes have a long history of trouble (reference the trouble in Lac-Mégantic Canada a couple of years ago). Did the EBT protect against such issues? Yes. The far track in this picture is the run-a-way car track. They’d leave the track switch set to the run-a-way track except for when a train was being assembled. That way if a car got away it would just roll onto this track, hit the mound of dirt and stop. Therefore, no wild car could run down the mainline.

– Pete Clarke



## ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATION

Friends of the East Broad Top, Inc. (FEBT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, historical, and educational society dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the East Broad Top Railroad National Historic Landmark in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. It was organized in 1983 and now boasts over 1,600 members. FEBT publishes an award-winning magazine, *Timber Transfer*, and a monthly e-newsletter, and operates a museum in Robertsdale PA, the EBT's southern terminus. See [febt.org/](http://febt.org/) for more information.



*The M-1 and Caboose 28 at the south junction switch of Colgate Grove. – Sam Painter photo +*

## 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 [Newsletter@febt.org](mailto:Newsletter@febt.org). Press time for information submitted is 8:00 PM Eastern time on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. Events occurring after the 25<sup>th</sup>, such as donations and memberships, will be considered part of the following month's information.