

# Rail-Trail News

The Rail-Trail Council of Northeast Pennsylvania is dedicated to renewing Northeast Pennsylvania's historic pathways as recreational trails for all to enjoy.

## NEW LIFETIME MEMBERS

Jeff & Brooke Gould, Thompson, PA  
Nina Nesky, New Milford, PA  
Bob Nesky, New Milford, PA

## NEW MEMBERS

Sue Bidwell, Reston, VA  
Norma & Chris Chacona, Susquehanna, PA  
Ron Harting, Windsor, NY  
Geoff Kase, Berwyn, PA  
Matt Nebzydowski, Montrose, PA  
Brenda Riefler, Thompson, PA  
Andy Rocuba, Forest City, PA  
Joseph Shivitz, Brown Dale, PA  
Randall Stokes, Forest City, PA  
John Zavacki, Dickson City, PA  
Janelle Zigon, Vandling, PA

## RENEWING MEMBERS

Bonnie Alco, Waverly, PA  
Harry Aumack, Keyport, NJ  
Cheryl & Randall Blauvelt, Westwood, NJ  
Gerald & Carlyn Bell, Phoenixville, PA  
Donald & Beverly Bennett, Herrick Center, PA  
Jack & Pat Brennan, Perkasie, PA  
Ivan & Elaine Burman, Thompson, PA  
Bill & Allice Burrell, Carbondale, PA  
Bruce Campbell, Lancaster, PA  
Joe & Ann Cherney, Starlight, PA  
Christine Chesnick, Endicott, NY  
Tom & Kathy Chesnick, Greenfield, PA  
JoAnn Clemo, Union Dale, PA  
Nick Cost, Forest City, PA  
John & Lisa Demark, Vandling, PA  
Robert Dietz, Bradley, CA  
Stephen & Renee Drobish, Dresher, PA  
Christina Fehlner, Railroad, PA  
William Glavich, Jefferson Twp, PA  
Mike & Joanne Gryzic, Larksville, PA  
Francis & JoAnn Hadnagy, Thompson, PA  
Wayne & Joanne Harz, Pleasant Mt, PA  
David Heim, Hawley, PA  
David & Carol Howell, N Abington, PA  
Sylvia Holteen, Ambler, PA  
Delores Kownaski, Dickson City, PA  
Gary Lippi, Carbondale, PA  
Ken & Leslie Maas, Dalton, PA  
Kate & Mark Moore, Susquehanna, PA  
Roy & Vee Pauli, Scranton, PA  
Joseph & Marjorie Pavlovich, Waymart, PA  
Abby Peck, Waverly, PA  
John Price, Carbondale, PA  
Joe & Lauren Prula, Covington Twp, PA  
Carl & Mary Pucul, Vandling, PA  
Rich Schnur Jr & John W Kessler, Afton, NY  
Katrina Scott, Union Dale, PA  
Donna Shivitz, Brown Dale, PA  
Jay H Smith, Salem, NJ  
Len Sowinski, Scott Twp, PA  
Lisa Taylor, Chinchilla, PA  
John E Thomas, Dickson City, PA  
Walter West, Warrington, Pa  
Donald & Roberta Whitney, Edmond, OK  
Howard Zendle, Vestal NY

## DONATIONS

Matching funds donation from IBM  
Rebecca & Alan Bennett, Montrose, PA  
Christina Fehlner, Railroad, PA  
Paul Kelly, Montrose, PA  
Angela Lambert, Jermy, PA  
O'Neil M Williams, Philadelphia, PA

## In Memory of Bob Hunter

Jim & Bobbi Achey, Union Dale, PA  
Charlie & Ginny Ahearn, Kingsley, PA  
Area Agency on Aging, Inc, Susquehanna, PA  
Bob & Ethel Breuche, Clifford Twp, PA  
Jim and Sheryl Brownlow, Thompson, PA  
Dennis & Lisa Burke, Burke's Maple Farm,  
Carbondale, PA  
Lynn & Paul Conrad, Clifford Twp, PA  
Helene Daneker & John Savery, Burlington, NJ  
Don & Ellen Felley, Parrish, FL

## HELP SUPPORT THE TRAIL



# CHALLENGES

- **D&H Distance Run** (1/2 marathon)
- **5K Run**
- **40-mile bike race**
- **20-mile bike race**
- **Walking challenges** (untimed)

**\$20 each challenge!**

**Get a cool T-shirt! Get a free raffle ticket!**

**REGISTER@**

**RunSignUp.com/dandhdistance**

**CHALLENGE YOUR FRIENDS!  
RESULTS ARE POSTED ONLINE.**

**Use any app to time your run, bike or measure your  
distance anytime during September, PA's Trails Month**

**Questions?**

**Rail-Trail Council**

**570-679-9300**

**trails@nep.net**

**Your participation helps to fund the maintenance  
and further improvements on the D&H**

# The Building of the Jefferson Branch of the Erie Railroad (Part 1)

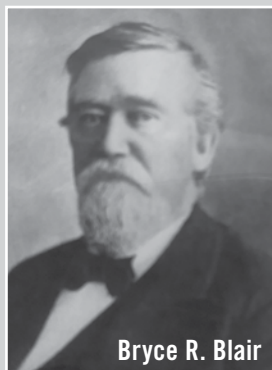
“The industrial revolution in America was born on October 9, 1829 in Carbondale, when the first cut of Delaware & Hudson Gravity Railroad coal cars, loaded with mass produced anthracite coal, headed up Plane No. 1 out of Carbondale for Honesdale and to market in New York City.”\*

When the coal reached Honesdale by way of the D&H Gravity Railroad, it was transferred to canal boats and hauled 108 miles through the D&H Canal to the Hudson River. Of course, the canal froze in the winter and the D&H company had to find other ways to get coal to market. Thus, the story of the building of the Jefferson Branch of the Erie Railroad from Carbondale to Lanesboro.

Talk of building a railroad to Lanesboro began as early as 1840, with the knowledge that the Erie would be completed through Lanesboro (over the Starrucca Viaduct) around 1847-8. The Erie Railroad headed towards Binghamton where it connected to the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad (A&S) which then headed north to Albany. Bringing coal to Albany was advantageous for both the D&H Canal company and for the populous area of Albany and upstate New York.

The Erie Railroad had a charter to build a railroad (established for a proposed railroad in Wayne County) called the Jefferson Railroad Company. George Olyphant, president and Thomas Dickson, vice president of the D&H Canal company entered into an agreement September 2, 1868 with the Erie Railway company to construct a railroad from Carbondale northward to its main line at Susquehanna. It would be built under the existing charter of Jefferson Railroad Company, with labor and capital provided by the Erie. The D&H principals purchased railroad bonds from the Erie, to help finance the line. The D&H would have trackage rights over the route to Lanesboro. They also entered into an agreement with the A&S Railroad to bring coal to Albany.

Construction of the 34.6-mile-long Jefferson Branch was begun in May 1869 (Dickson was then president) and completed in October 1870! How is it possible that this construction took less than two years?



Bryce R. Blair

The chief engineer of the railroad project was Bryce R. Blair, a Scottish civil engineer who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1852. He was first employed on the construction of the North Branch Canal in Tunkhannock, and then on the Junction Canal that joined NY to PA canals. He was engaged in surveys of the first railroads in the Wyoming Valley. He was appointed the chief engineer of the Jefferson Branch in December of 1868. Mr. Blair purchased property in Union Dale to occupy during the construction.

The *Carbondale Advance* announced on April 3, 1869 that proposals from contractors for the construction of the railroad were to be received by April 15th. In the April 17th edition of the *Advance*, it was noted that “many of the best Railroad Contractors in the Country” were in Carbondale during the week and making bids for work upon the Jefferson. Construction to begin no later than May 1st. The work to be done on the 35-mile rail line has been divided into 32 sections, averaging a little more than a mile to a section.

The contracts for construction were awarded in late April of 1869. All 32 sections were awarded, some contractors had 3 or 4 sections, others had only one section. For example, “A. Dreisbach is the contractor on Sections 3, 8, 9 and 14.” Work began on all sections simultaneously! The contracts required all masonry work to be done by the November 1, 1869 and the remaining work including grading, cutting, embankment work, etc. to be done by April 1, 1870. The *Advance* reported that the contractors were busy in getting lumber and erecting their boarding houses and their boarding masters on the ground...

Part 2 will include the construction and its challenges...and more about Bryce Blair!

*For a great history on the D&H Gravity Railroad see the video on Wally Life “Fueling the Great American Industrial Revolution.”*

*\*Thanks to S. Robert Powell, Ph.D. for his DVD series on the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, October 9, 2016. Most of this information comes from Volume 11, the Jefferson Branch of the Erie Railroad (available from the Carbondale Historical Society).*



Site of proposed pedestrian bridge at Stevens Point

## Trail Improvement Updates

The northern D&H from Brandt to the NY border is still on schedule to be bid out in the fall. It is a Transportation Enhancement project that will be administered through our local PennDOT offices. The trail section from Stevens Point to Brandt will also be put out to bid once we receive the permit for the bridge project over the Starrucca Creek. Although two separate funding sources, coordination is needed to not interfere with each other. Design work continues the trail section from Thompson to Stevens Point. Hopefully, these trail plans will enable us to seek out upcoming grants as they become available.

We have received funding from the Endless Mountains Heritage Region for additional trail improvements on the Endless Mountains Trail. Plans are to fix the drainage issues near the Jehovah's Witness Church and at Rose Road.

## Forest City—Outdoor Town

Congrats to Forest City on receiving a peer grant through PA DCNR to help develop and market its potential as a "Trail Town" and an "Outdoor Town." Forest City has many recreational assets, including the D&H and O&W Rail-Trails, Kennedy Park, nearby State Game lands, Elk Mountain Ski Resort and many more.



Eastern PA  
**GREENWAYS** and  
**TRAILS SUMMIT**

## Virtual Summit

The Summit is going virtual. Join the regional trails community and inspiring speakers for virtual education sessions and mobile workshops throughout all of September. Registration opens August 10th. <https://register2020epgts.eventbrite.com/>

### Membership Renewal Form

Please renew! The date on the mailing label on the reverse indicates when your membership expires.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime/Founding \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> I am available for trail cleanups.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron/Sponsor \$250    | <input type="checkbox"/> Call me to discuss a corporate donation.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club/Organization \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in finding out more about the "Trail Tender" program.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$35             | <input type="checkbox"/> Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to: _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20         | <input type="checkbox"/> Send me a NEW brochure.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student \$15     | <input type="checkbox"/> I am willing to volunteer for the D&H Caboose restoration project                |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> I am enclosing a donation to be used towards the D&H Caboose restoration project |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please update your address here if necessary. Make checks payable to **Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA**  
P.O. Box 32, Union Dale PA 18470 / Phone: 570-679-9300 / E mail: [trails@nep.net](mailto:trails@nep.net)



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## Exploring Different Sections of the D&H Trail by Foot

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**M**ost recently, we did a “pop-up” hike from the **Thompson Train Station\*** to Bucks Falls by foot. You can call it a hike or a walk, but it was truly an adventure in nature. We met at the one and only, last one standing, train station on the D&H rail line in Thompson. As we stood waiting for the adventure to begin, some wandered to the beautifully kept **cemetery\*** across the road. As they respectfully peered in, standing behind locked gates, they could see some of the tombstones dated 1800’s...with permission, another adventure for another day. **Jefferson Inn\*** still stands, although abandoned, to the right of the cemetery on the other side of the trail heading south. History, everywhere.

Turning around, we head north. Bucks Falls is three plus miles straight ahead following the trail. You can’t get lost physically, but being surrounded by wildflowers, tall grasses, and sunshine you will get lost in the serenity provided by nature. Queen Anne’s lace lines the trail leading the way with butterflies and bees busy at work and an occasional cricket hopping along. You will notice bright red flowers that have the shape of daisies, but to the trained gardener it would be identified as Bee Balm. It’s magnificent with the greenery around it. Surrounded by tall trees, the tree canopy keeps us cool in the summer heat making for a comfortable hike. We continue pushing north through this beautiful field of Black Eyed Susan plants, Clover, Crownvetch, and wild basil with pretty pink flowers following the stone path, otherwise known as the Trail. Before we know it, we have reached the gate that leads to the switchback which will guide us to the upper part of Bucks Falls. Standing at the top of the switchback looking across the valley, you can see remnants of the **Little Starrucca Viaduct\***, the steel structure that carried the train over the Bucks Falls valley. Two very tall stone structures and some abutments still stand as a reminder of the D&H railway. As we make our way down, there is signage with photos along the path that tells of the history. Amazing.

Arriving at the Falls is a sight to behold. It’s exquisite simplicity of rock cuts, moss, and the sound of water gives you a whole other experience of nature’s beauty. We continue to follow the path to the bottom of the Falls. Standing on a boulder taking in the spray of the falls, the trickle of water over it’s mossy dressed rocks and the sunlight, illuminates the dance of the water falling. You will truly forget everything else as Mother Nature nurtures your senses. After a quiet, peaceful lean on one of the many spruces or a sit on a boulder, it’s time to make our way back. We look for what we might have missed on our way to the Falls. Arriving back at the Thompson Station in three hours time, we completed almost seven miles and were left with a sense of accomplishment and joy, ready to take on the rest of the day.





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## Trail Events

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**D**ue to COVID-19, we have only one planned hike, September 19 with Bill Kessler on Forest Management. “Pop-Up” hikes, walks and bike rides will be happening in August, September, and October, please check Facebook or our website as these events will be last minute. Planning to do a Birding Walk, late September, early October, please check Facebook or [www.neparailtrails.org](http://www.neparailtrails.org)

This year our D&H Half and 5K and our fundraiser will be virtual. Runners have the whole month of September to complete the run: course will be set up! Track your time/distance with a fitness app and send us that information. Scranton Running Company will then post times online. We will also have other challenges as biking, 40 miles or 20 miles, and walking sections of the trail. All the money raised will be used for trail improvements and maintenance. You will receive a commemorative 2020 t-shirt with your registration. Please sign up today. [www.runsignup.com/dandhdistanцерun](http://www.runsignup.com/dandhdistanцерun)

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## Building Health Series

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Outdoor group activities designed to build health naturally.

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### WALKING MONDAYS

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Mondays, 9 am. Meet at the Rail Trail Office, Union Dale.

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### BIKING WEDNESDAYS

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Wednesdays in August, 5:30 pm. Union Dale Trailhead.

Wednesdays in September, 5:00 pm. Simpson Trailhead (Morris Avenue).

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### SECOND SATURDAY TRAIL YOGA

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September 12, 9:30 am. Thompson Railroad Station.

October 10, 9:30 am. Panther’s Bluff.

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## C A L E N D A R

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RTC board and public meetings are still on hold. The board now meets monthly with Zoom on the 4th Thursday of each month.

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June Felley, Rydal, PA  
Mary Felley, Jenkintown, PA  
George & Susan Haff, Union Dale, PA  
Sally Horne, Woolwich, ME  
Nancy's Bridge Friends  
JoAnn Hall, Clifford Twp, PA  
Debbie & Jack McNamara, Union Dale, PA  
Mountain View Garden Club, Clifford, PA  
Phil & Laurie Pass, Clifford Twp, PA  
Nancy Wottrich & Bruce McNaught, New Milford, PA  
Karen & Howie Wyandt, Union Dale, PA  
Nancy Ross, Union Dale, PA  
Rudy & Nina Ruedemann, Kingsley, PA  
Linda Suraci, Mayfield, PA  
Ray Zrebic, Casa Grande, AZ

**In Memory of Bill Keim**

Richard Burdick, South Gibson, PA  
Susan Hall, Union Dale, PA  
Irene Lipperini, Union Dale, PA  
Nancy Ross, Union Dale, PA  
Edward & Mary Tourje, Union Dale, PA  
Laurie Graham & Larry Wilson, Clifford Twp, PA

**Caboose Restoration**

Vickie Brownell, Thompson, PA  
Mike & Joanne Gryziec, Larksville, PA  
Gary Lippi, Cabondale, PA  
Katrina Scott, Union Dale, PA  
Howard Zendle, Vestal NY

**D&H 2020 Challenges Sponsors**

Brian T Kelly C.P.A. & Associates, LLC,  
Carbondale, PA  
Comprehensive Physical Therapy, Forest City,  
PA  
Elk Mountain Ski Resort, Union Dale, PA  
Charles W Grimm Construction, Inc  
Hendrick Manufacturing, Carbondale, PA  
Keystone Propane, Throop, PA  
Kost Tire & Auto Service, Clarks Summit, PA  
KW Oil Company, Inc, Forest City PA  
Lenox Propane, West Clifford, PA  
Michael A Barbetti C.P.A., LLC, Dunmore, PA  
NEP Telephone Company, Forest City, PA  
New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co, Inc, New  
Enterprise, PA  
Spring Hill Foundation, Clifford, PA

# Bill Keim

Rail-Trail Council has lost a founding and long-time board member, Bill Keim on May 9, 2020. Bill managed the Herrick Hill Blueberry Farm and proceeds from picking over Labor Day, went to RTC. He also allowed free picking so we could sell blueberry and ice cream sundaes during Forest City Old Home Week. Bill a very active and beloved board member. Bill was 97. Rest in peace, Bill and wife Harriet.

# Cables General Store

Cables General Store in Union Dale is under new management—welcome Krysta & Duffy Samuels. They have some delicious and healthy food choices, and offer dinner specials on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Stop in, you will be pleasantly surprised. There is outdoor seating. 570-679-2151 [www.cablesgeneralstore.com](http://www.cablesgeneralstore.com)

Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA  
P.O. Box 32  
Union Dale PA 18470  
[trails@nep.net](mailto:trails@nep.net)  
[www.neparailtrails.org](http://www.neparailtrails.org)

## WHEN DOES MY MEMBERSHIP EXPIRE?

Your membership renewal date is to the right of your name on the mailing label, highlighted in yellow. To the extreme right is the mailing date. Effective 2019, memberships for all receiving electronic newsletters will expire on December 31.

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 4  
Forest City PA

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED