**LIFETIME MEMBERS**

Bob & Sue Sanderson, Limetown, PA

**NEW MEMBERS**

Dove & Linda Bernarsky, Vandling, PA
David & Jill Rohl, Hummelstown, PA

**RENEWING MEMBERS**

Robert Barto, Pottsville, PA
Todd & Colleen Bobrovec, Clifford Twp, PA
Peter & Marian Borick, Herrick Center, PA
Annette Brown, Pleasant Mt, PA
Theresa & Keith Bohl, Rahway, NJ
Bill Burke, Moscow, PA
Robert Calabria, Morrisville, NC
Tom & Carol Chesnick, Vandling, PA
Tom & Kathy Chesnick, Clifford Twp, PA
Gene Carey, Spring Brook Twp, PA
Billy Cullane, Thompson, PA
Margie Cunningham, Hatfield, PA
Mary Flegley, Jenkintown, PA
William Keri, Carbondale, PA
Faith Fleming, Waverly, PA
Gerald & Kathleen Franscarzi, Union Dale, PA
Marion Franscarzi, Forest City, PA
Esther Freedmann, Clarks Green, PA
Tom Fran, Johnson City, NY
Beth Gallagher, Scranton, PA
Gene Gallagher, Clarks Summit, PA
Alan Gelick, Clifford Twp, PA
Mary Graylock, Simpson, PA
Patricia Green, Dunmore, PA
Sandra Guman, Archbald, PA
Stan & Sharon Hadley, Lakewood, PA
Carol & David Howell, North Abington Twp, PA
Bob Hunter, Union Dale, PA
Tom & Denise Kavanagh, King of Prussia, PA
Rob & Sarah Hearing, Clifford Twp, PA
William Keller, South Abington Twp, PA
Keystone Miniature Horse Club, Waymart, PA
Joe & Mary Kluck, Scranton, PA
Donald & Elisabeth Korinda, South Abington Twp, PA
Bob Kramer, Equinunk, PA
Fred & Myrna Lemire-Lally, Nicholson, PA
Shirley Leslie, White Mills, PA
Joy Loomis, Scranton, PA
Thelma Lowry, Clifford Twp, PA
Bonnie & Joseph Lundy, Gladwyne, PA
Ken & Leslie Maxx, Dalton, PA
Marjorie & Richard McDowell, Kingsley, PA
John Marc, Scranton, PA
Jim & Mary McKane, Archbald, PA
Vic & Sharon Mihalic, Dickson City, PA
Bob Morgan, Honesdale, PA
Karl Mousey, Norristown, PA
Catherine Parsons, Simpson, PA
Michael & Joyce Petronchak Jr, Eynon, PA
Barbara Phillips & Michael Jarosh, Mehoopany, PA
James & Nancy Prawdzik, Bridgewater, NJ
Karl Proctor, Binghamton, NY
Fred Schultz, Washington Crossing, PA
Tom & Cathy Schuyler, Easton, PA
Linda Scott, Honesdale, PA
Caroline & John Seamans, Fleetville, PA
Melvin Seely, Honesdale, PA
Michelle Smith, Covington Township, PA
Pam Sweda, Hanover, PA
Matthew & Rachel Szwewski, Sellersville, PA
David & Margaret Tomaic, Clifford Twp, PA
Gary & Denise Treen, Bloomsburg, PA
Richard & Ann Marie Utegg, Vandling, PA
Richard Wattum, Lakewood, PA
Robert Welter, Windsor, NY
William Glass Company, Wilmington, DE
Bob & Maggie Young, Madison Twp, PA

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**$1 Million in Trail Funding!**

Good news for trail improvement plans! Rail-Trail Council, with Herrick Township as sponsor has been awarded a PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) award for the construction of 7 miles of D&H Rail-Trail. Across the state there were 56 grant recipients awarded a total of $33 million in transportation alternative funding, so we were fortunate to get one of the awards!

The award will allow RTC to improve 7 miles of trail in the Herrick and Ararat Township area. The project will start in Herrick Center at the State Route 374 crossing and proceed north to Ararat Road. The RTC has been making improvements along Ararat Road in anticipation of this next phase.

The improvements will include extensive drainage work, grading, trail surfacing with trail mix aggregate, access control gates and regulatory signage. Our improved trail miles will increase from 10 to 17 miles.

The RTC will need to match the grant and will be starting a capital campaign soon! Luckily we have a DCNR grant to help with engineering and some of the construction match.

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**Two Bridge Projects Completed**

The Brandt bridge project is complete with a new concrete deck, railings and a streamside bench. Brandt is located at Mile 32 (of the 38 mile D&H) and was the site of the northernmost trail station, a chair factory and two brickyards. The bridge crosses the Starrucca Creek in the vicinity of ‘Jefferson Junction’ where the D&H connected to Erie’s mainline. The project was funded in part (50%) by the Greenways, Trails & Recreation Program of the Marcellus Legacy Fund administered through the PA Department of Community & Economic Development.

The other bridge completed is north of Forest City and just north of the crossover of SR 171. It is on a well-used section of trail that includes the D&H Distance Run. The bridge crosses the upper Lackawanna River, downstream from old Stillwater Dam. Work is also in progress to improve the rocky trail connecting the D&H to the O&W. This project was funded at 80% with a PA Recreational Trails grant through PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The Council still has one more bridge to improve on the D&H in Lanesboro. This project is on hold until repairs to the abutments can be made.

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**CALENDAR**

**DECEMBER 21**

Winter Solstice Trails Day. 10 AM, Union Dale. Snowshoe/xcounty ski

**NO JANUARY RTC MEETING**

**JANUARY 25**

Winter Trails Day. 1 PM, Union Dale, Interpretive nature walk/snowshoe

**FEBRUARY 14**

Winter Trails Day. Check website for details

**FEBRUARY 26**

RTC Dinner/Meeting. RTC Office/Cables Deli, 6/7 PM

**MARCH 8**

Secrets of the D&H hike/walk. Check website for details.
“Breaker Whistle Blow, Hair on Neck Stand Up”

Take a close look at the photo. It pictures part of the campus of the Hillside Coal & Iron Company’s Forest City’s colliery. The two coal-processing buildings are in the background, but because of their size they dominate the ‘shot.’ Please look carefully, however, at the small building in the lower left. It was the colliery office, which was the workplace of the superintendent and the clerks who ran the numbers, i.e. the mine clerk and the payroll clerk. What we want you to note, though, is the powerful jet of vapor steaming from the stack on the right-hand side of the office as you view it. A jet of vapor that strong can only be of one source: the steam-driven ‘breaker’ whistle. In the case of the Forest City colliery, the whistle wasn’t on the breaker itself, but rather on the colliery office. As the photo was snapped, the whistle was blowing. In what was usual practice, the whistle blew twice a day, at the start and end of work.

Your writer is sure of this because of his Forest City boyhood. The photo was taken from Higgins Street near the corner of South Street. The office is long gone, but I know it. I’ve been in it.

My grandmother, who came to America from Slovenia in 1902, was the source of much of my coal-era lore. Her husband, who died before I was born, was a miner. On one occasion—don’t ask me how old I was—she uttered a sentence that has remained in my memory for all of my life. ‘Gram’ spoke excellent English, but as a holdover from her native Slovene she did not use articles. In Slovene, what we accomplish with articles (the, a, an) is handled with word endings, not with articles. Thus, Gram did not say “the breaker whistle,” just “breaker whistle.”

Yes, the whistle blew on schedule twice a day. Whenever else it blew, it signaled an accident in the mines. During my grandmother’s young married-to-a-miner life, it too-often signaled a death. Therefore, describing it a generation later, Gram uttered a chilling phrase that remains with me, virtually a lifetime later: “Breaker whistle blow, hair on neck stand up.”

One hundred and eighty-seven men and boys died at work in Forest City’s ‘Hillside’ colliery. Another 75 died at Vandling’s colliery. More died at other area collieries.

It has been my privilege to work, with a small group of others, at a Rail-Trail Council effort we have called “The Colliery Commemoration Project.”

It is the intention of the project to see to the placement of commemorative markers at the many colliery sites along our Trails. We have just started, by assembling all the names, colliery by colliery.

What do you think? There are some who have said that we should keep the Rail-Trails “sign free” and as close to nature as we can make them. We have voted in favor of modest commemorative markers. Please let us hear from you. Send us an e-mail at trails@nep.net.

Mark C. Walsh
Thanks to Kirk Newsom!

A plaque of appreciation was presented to RTC’s outgoing President Kirk Newsom, at its recent Christmas dinner/meeting.

Kirk was president of the RTC since May 2009 and continues to be active with the Council as Right-of-Way committee chair, executive committee ex-officio and with the D&H Distance Run Committee. The board recognized his long-time commitment and service to the organization. His leadership has helped the council reach a higher level of professionalism.

Welcome, Bob Breuche!

Welcome to our new board president, Bob Breuche. Bob has been a long-time RTC member, board member and committee member. He comes to us a retired school principal and we look forward to working with Bob to continue the growth of our organization and the development of our trails.

New D&H Rail-Trail Guides

We have updated our trip-tic-like trail guide. Only $1 (or $2 with postage). Or pick up one at the office or Cables Deli. The guide is also available on our website for download. www.nepa-rail-trails.org

Save the Date

D&H Distance/5K Run: September 13, 2015

Donations

In Memory of Lu Swingle
Nancy Ross

In Memory of Ed Pangonis,
Nancy Ross

In Memory of Jim Christiansen
Dave & Eva Christiansen

In Memory of Harriet Keim
Nancy Ross
Jack & Deb McNamara
Lynn & Paul Conrad

Rest in Peace, Harriet

Harriet Keim, wife of one of Rail-Trail’s founding board members, recently passed away. Bill Keim has been on the board of the council since its inception in 1991. Bill & Harriet hosted numerous ‘pick your-own blueberries’ days at Herrick Blueberry Farm with profits benefitting the RTC! Harriet was a kind and gentle person, always with a smile and compliment. Our sincere condolences to Bill and family.

Membership Renewal Form

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

☐ Lifetime/Founding $500
☐ Patron/Sponsor $250
☐ Club/Organization $100
☐ Family $35
☐ Individual $20
☐ Senior/Student $15

☐ I am available for trail cleanups.
☐ Call me to discuss a corporate donation.
☐ Send me Sam’s Club Business Membership Card.
☐ I am interested in finding out more about the “Trail Tender” program.
☐ Send my newsletter electronically (instead of by mail) to: ____________________________
☐ Send me a brochure.

Name

Phone Number

Street Address

Email 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

Winter Trail Days

Rail Trail Council’s Winter Trail Day events include yoga, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, nature walks and more! Motivating yourself for exercise in winter can be difficult when the days are short and the weather is chilly. We plan to make it easier with a series of events we promise will be both fun and informative.

Sunday, December 21

10 AM: Celebrate the Winter Solstice. Activities begin with yoga at the Rail-Trail Office in Union Dale, followed by snowshoeing and cross-country skiing on the trail. RTC will also offer a short clinic in snowshoe basics and will lend snowshoes (limited supplies).

Sunday, January 25

1 PM: Discover what’s going on in the natural world in winter. Interpretive naturalist Nancy Wottrich will lead a winter walk/snowshoe on the D&H Trail in Union Dale. The walk will focus on winter birds, evergreen plants and animal track identification. The event is perfect for children interested in the outdoors.

Saturday, February 14

TBA. Check our website for updates.

Sunday, March 8

10 AM: Discover the “secrets” of the D&H Rail Trail. Join us for a snowshoe/hike to interesting sites. This guided hike takes us to places on and off the trail that tell stories of the past steeped in local history. Meeting place TBA.

All snowshoe/cross-country ski events are weather dependent. We have a limited supply of snowshoes and cross-country skis to lend. They can be reserved by calling the office at 570-679-9300. Equipment is available to rent at Chet’s Place www.chetsplace.com
Give the Gift of Membership

This holiday season show your appreciation for the special people in your life while supporting Rail Trail Council of NEPA. Your gift membership will be supporting Rail-Trail Council’s work to build, maintain and connect trail which means even more trail for you to enjoy! You can use the form below, download a printable gift membership form from our website (www.nepa-rail-trails.org) or contact the office at 570-679-9300.

Gift Amounts: Family $35, Individual $20, Senior $15

A year-long gift membership includes:
- Our quarterly newsletter filled with the latest RTC news and updates
- Schedule of our monthly meeting in area restaurants
- Access to Sam’s Club business membership
- Volunteer opportunities, invitations to special events and more
- The satisfaction their membership is helping to make the trail a reality!

Gift Certificate

RAIL-TRAIL COUNCIL OF NEPA

This certificate entitles:

TO: ONE YEAR MEMBERSHIP TO RAIL-TRAIL

Members receive a quarterly newsletter containing: progress reports on acquisition of the trails, a calendar of events (such as organized walks, bike rides, clean-ups on the trail, benefit dinners), and a schedule of monthly meetings at area restaurants, and satisfaction that their support is helping to make the trails a reality.

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

Rail-Trail Council of Northeast PA
P.O. Box 32
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trails@nep.net
www.nepa-rail-trails.org

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