

# The Semaphore

## The Volunteer Newsletter of Steamtown National Historic Site

Volume 2, Issue 1

Spring 2017

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## NYO&W 105

By Norm Barrett



NPS photo: K. Ganz

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January 4<sup>th</sup> saw the arrival of the O&W GE 44 tonner locomotive at Steamtown. Purchased by the Ontario & Western Railway Historical Society, this original 1942 locomotive was saved from the scrapper's torch. It was last based in Winslow, New Jersey and was owned by the late Joe Petaccio owner of the Southern Railway of New Jersey. The locomotive languished for a number of years after Mr. Petaccio's untimely death.

When the O&W RHS was advised that their offer to purchase the locomotive, it was received with much joy as the 105 is one of only a few original O&W pieces of equipment left. It was necessary to make arrangements to move the locomotive quickly as the SRNJ was cleaning up their unused equipment. Prior discussions with Steamtown and their acceptance to display the locomotive at the Park allowed the move to proceed quickly.

The NYO&W, the last coal hauling railroad to enter the Lackawanna Valley ran into financial difficulties in the mid 1930's when the use of coal took a sharp decline. This forced the O&W into bankruptcy. The Trustee assigned to oversee the O&W saw an opportunity to save money by eliminating steam locomotive with their extra manpower, i.e. Fireman and the associated mechanical staff and facilities. As the O&W had a number of lite rail branches in upstate New York, the O&W purchased five GE 44-ton diesel electric locomotives. Their success in reducing cost prompted the O&W to completely dieselize with GM NW-2 switchers and a fleet of GM FT and F3 locomotives.

Three 44-tonners arrived in December of 1941 and the last one, the 105, arrived in August of 1942. They cost a whopping \$35,000.00 each. The O&W sold off the small switcher in 1950-51.

It is the intention of the O&W RHS to, at first; cosmetically fix the 105 and pending an evaluation possibly restore it to operation. It will make a perfect shop switcher and can be used on the Scranton Limited shuttles and Carbon-dale Line runs as needed.



NPS photo: K. Ganz

## Superintendent's Corner Debbie Conway

Happy Spring! It is great to see the leaves greening up on trees and spring flowers starting to bloom. I think the March pummeling by winter storm Stella made us all a little eager to see spring arrive. The start of 2017 has brought some interesting challenges to Steamtown. The park presently has a number of vacant positions, across all divisions (except Administration). President Trump's hiring freeze and a major restructuring of the Executive Branch of government has limited our ability to move forward with announcing permanent positions. What does this mean? We need your support more than ever and I expect it will be a few more weeks before we know more about how all these changes will impact STEA.

Other important information has to do with Railfest and our excursion season. We have learned through the Friends of Northeast Railroading that Norfolk Southern has indicated that they will not provide equipment moves for free for events such as Railfest. If this is truly the case, then we need to be creative on how we approach Railfest 2017 and look for ways to make this event successful without equipment from outside the local area. As always, we are open to ideas.

Finally, I have received questions from several of you already regarding our railroad operating schedule and why it isn't online and out to the public yet. NPS is presently negotiating a new contract for our rail operations and until that contract is finalized, I do not feel comfortable advertising excursions. I do expect there will be a slight delay to our season this year; however, I hope that delay will be minimal.

As always thank you for your support and all you do for Steamtown and the NPS. I cannot stress enough what an important role you play in making sure our visitors have a positive experience while at the park. Keep up the good work.



## Yard Shuttle Times

Yard shuttle times have changed in an attempt to reduce conflict with weekend excursion times.

For 2017 the times are 10:30, 11:30, 1:15, and 2:15. Turntable times are approximately 9:30 and 3:15.

## TRAIN & ENGINE

### Dick Roden



NPS photo: K. Ganz

By the time you read this newsletter, the Train and Engine crews will be well into their annual training classes. All engineers and conductors will also be re-certifying for their 3 year operational certificates.

On Feb. 18th 2017 the following people successfully completed the Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers class (DSLE): Norm Barrett; Chris Labar; Dick Roden and Aaron Stout.

On the same day the following people successfully completed the Designated Supervisor of Conductors Class (DSC): Ron Comunale; Andy Ottinger; Mike Rinkunas; Larry Scucci, Sr. and John Sheerin. These people will be responsible for training new people in the various positions in Train and Engine service.

The position of DSLE & DSC is a very demanding job. These folks will be right there during operations to oversee the safe movement of our trains to make sure that all visitors have a safe and secure experience.

The recertification classes were administered by Roger Samuels, NPS/SNCX Trainmaster. Again, as a reminder that there will be an orientation for new people who would like to get involved in train and engine service on Sat. May 6th. If you know someone who would like to get involved, they can download an application from the Park's website and give it to Kenny Ganz, the Volunteer Coordinator, for Steamtown NHS.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Volunteer Passes

Volunteer Passes are available free for Volunteers with 250 service hours with federal agencies that participate in the Interagency Pass Program?

Contact your local federal recreation site for more information about volunteer opportunities or visit [Volunteer.gov](http://Volunteer.gov)





## STOP, LOOK, & LIVE!

As we commence our 2017 excursion season I want to remind everyone reading this of their responsibility as a volunteer or employee to make sure our visiting public has a safe and enjoyable experience while visiting our site. Please remember that the visitor is the number one reason we are here at Steamtown NHS. No job is so important, no service so urgent that you cannot take the time to perform your duties safely. Here are a few tips that need to be practiced so each and everyone one of us can return home each day safely.

1. When crossing tracks look both ways before crossing.
2. When crossing tracks do so at a 90 degree angle.
3. Never step or walk on the head (top) of the rail.
4. Do not walk in the gage of the tracks. (In the center between the two rails)
5. Kindly remind visitors not to place any type of objects on top of the rails. (Coins, rocks, etc.)
6. Expect railroad equipment to move on any track, in any direction, at any time.

**Roger J. Samuels**  
Trainmaster NPS/SNCX

## Steamtown Volunteers nominated for Regional Awards



VIP Aiden Schafer has been named the NPS Northeast Regional Hartzog Youth Volunteer award winner for fiscal year 2016.

The award, recognizing the contributions of an individual younger than 18 years of age is awarded once a year by the National Park Service.

Aiden joined the STEA VIP program two years ago at age thirteen and it's been "Full Steam Ahead" ever since!

In just the short time Aiden has been volunteering at STEA, he has accumulated over 900 hours of service performing such duties as tracking volunteer hours, providing interpretative programs, and assisting with volunteer recruiting.

The entire staff at Steamtown NHS is very proud to have Aiden as one of our own!

Volunteer Dick Roden was nominated for the Hartzog Enduring Service Award for his years of dedicated service to Steamtown. Unfortunately Dick was not selected for the honor, but is still an award winning volunteer in our eyes.



## Volunteer Spotlight Laverne Staten

"There is more to Steamtown than just trains, I tell people when they ask where I work," says Laverne Staten, Resource Management volunteer.

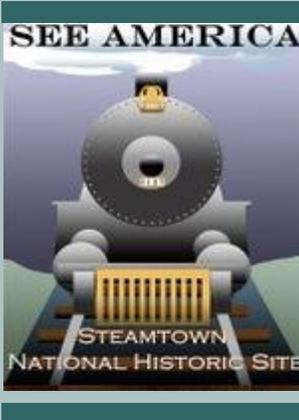
Laverne is part of a senior program coordinated by PathStone through CareerLink. It looks to put seniors in workplace positions and gain on the job experience. Steamtown utilizes PathStone workers in Resource Management and Custodial areas. Laverne reports to Park Historian, Patrick McKnight. According to Pat, "Laverne has helped process a variety of archival collections at Steamtown over the years. She has written up basic information on some collections. Others she has helped build containers to protect them in the future. What Laverne excels in is scanning large format documents and glass plate negatives. She has scanned tens of thousands of maps, architectural drawings and ledgers that have assisted various researchers."

Of all the scans Laverne has done volunteering at Steamtown, the ones she found the most interesting were of concrete stairways winding through railroad stations and has used some of the scans to decorate her home.



NPS photo

Montclair Station Stairway  
DL&W, New Jersey



**2017 Upcoming Events**

**May 20**  
**BSA Merit Badge**

**May 27**  
**Memorial Day Weekend**  
**Race of the Saints & Firemen's Picnic**

**June 17**  
**BSA Merit Badge**

**June 24**  
**Founders Day DEWA**

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# From the VIP Coordinator



Hello and welcome to the spring 2017 edition of "The Semaphore"

As we gear up for our 2017 operating season, the park and the entire National Park Service as a whole faces some very significant issues. With the federal hiring freeze and the potential for a 12% Interior Department budget cut along with increased visitation, the high level of services we provide will no doubt be affected.

As volunteers your time and efforts will be especially critical this year as we face this daunting challenge. The National Park Service is considered the "Gold Standard" among federal agencies in various fields such as restoration, education, resource protection, and interpretation. As such we will be relying on volunteers more than ever to accomplish our mission.

In today's world, everyone is asked to do more with less and it is no different at Steamtown. I know that our paid staff is stretched to the limit and that is why our volunteers, the heart and soul of Steamtown, are so important to us.

I'm sure that we as a park can get through this situation with your help.

It is my honor and pleasure to work alongside such people as yourselves.

Kenny

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## National ParkRx Day

### Sunday, April 23, 12:00-4:00pm

Steamtown NHS closes out National Park Week with *Scranton Limited* Yard Shuttles, our annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner, and participation in National ParkRx Day. You are well familiar with the first two activities, but let me tell you about the latter and ask for your assistance for a couple of hours that afternoon.

National ParkRx Day began last year as a NPS Centennial nationwide initiative promoting walking, walkable communities, and getting outdoors and active in support of a 2015 US Surgeon General's call to action. Steamtown's 2017 ParkRx Day will be a combination community health fair and an opportunity to meet representatives from local organizations that promote active lifestyles for people of all ages and all fitness levels. This growing movement of prescribing parks and nature not only improves human health but encourages people to use their local, state, and national park and public lands.

We will have representatives from Commonwealth Health, Geisinger Health, American Red Cross, Lackawanna Heritage Valley, our neighboring NPS parks along the Delaware River, and a host of local hiking/walking/fitness organizations sharing with our visitors the incredible opportunities to get out and get active in NEPA. There will even be Master Gardeners to help green up your thumbs!

We can certainly use some of our great VIPs to assist our participating organizations and orient our visitors during National ParkRx Day, even if only for an hour or two. There will be plenty of time to get refreshed before enjoying a fun VIP Recognition Dinner later that evening. If you can help, please let Kenny know. Thanks in advance for helping National Park Week end on a high point!

Bill Fischer  
Chief of VS&RM