

The Semaphore

The Volunteer Newsletter of Steamtown National Historic Site

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Summer 2017

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National Park Week 2017: Parks 101

April 15, Tax Day, is normally a day of dread, however, this year at Steamtown, it was a day of celebration, the kick off of National Park Week and the return of train operations. For 2017, the theme of National Park week was "Parks 101." This is a reference to the 101st year of the National Park Service as well as the basic level of course work in school. The main goal was to remind people to enjoy the outdoors, and their park lands.

The Baldwin Locomotive Works No. 26 had just completed her annual inspection before NPS Week. New water injectors received from the Strasburg Rail Road shop were installed over the winter months, replacing the original Hancock-made injectors to provide more reliable service.

Steamtown began running trains on Saturday, instead of the normal Sunday start-up of rail operations. With the two weekends being fee-free days, and decent weather, the visitation numbers were up.

The Caboose Experience train led by Baldwin no. 26 on weekends added to the Monday-to-Friday runs of the Scranton Limited. Nine days of steam in mid-April really got our season off to a good start. It was also nice to hear the sounds of steam around the town after a long four and a half month hiatus. Ridership for the Caboose on the first weekend totaled 715 passengers, 1003 passengers for the second weekend. The weekday Scranton Limited trains had respectable ridership as well with 136 on Monday with a grand total of 467.

Walking tours of the locomotive shop and other portions of the museum proved very popular as all tours were enjoyed by more than the usual amount of visitors. The caboose trains were quite a hit, and we are happy to add them to our list of tours than just offering them during Railfest.





Superintendent's Corner Debbie Conway



NPS photo: K. Ganz

Wow, what a year! 2017 will go down as the year of the challenges especially for the Steamtown train operations. First let me thank you all for sticking with us through these challenges. We rely and depend on all of you to help make Steamtown the great place it is to visit.

As you are aware, we were unable to get a rail operations contract in place by the beginning of our season. This caused delays to our excursion schedule and required us to modify our Scranton Limited train rides on the weekends. I appreciate the flexibility shown by both staff and volunteers to adapt to these changes and work to provide a positive experience for our visitors. At this point we have a short term contract in place through December. The NPS is still working on a longer term agreement with the PNRRA and DL for future years. My hope is that we can put together a five year operating contract so we can minimize impact such as these.

We started the year with a four month long hiring freeze, which prohibited us from moving forward on hiring several positions. This required us to get creative. Ted Johnson was hired on a lateral reassignment from the Statue of Liberty to fill the interpretive position vacated last fall by Dan Kahl. We were very fortunate that Jessica Weinman was hired as the new Chief of Maintenance prior to the freeze taking effect, however, her entry on duty was delayed for nearly 6 months due to the freeze and the vetting process that ensued following the freeze. She is now on board and jumping in with both feet. Seasonal hiring, although not impacted by the freeze, was severely slow this year with lists of

eligible candidates getting to parks very late. Larry Gentry was picked up as a seasonal laborer in maintenance and is now working throughout the park. Chris LaBar, a long time VIP at the park, was hired as a seasonal locomotive engineer. Please welcome all these new faces to the Steam Team.

We have several more positions vacant and at least two pending retirements. Although the freeze has been lifted, we do still have restrictions on hiring and a strong concern for what the FY 18 budget might bring. With that in mind, we have held off filling permanent vacancies for the time being. This will also give us a little time to evaluate our organizational structure and see if there are any opportunities for operational efficiencies that might improve Steamtown's sustainability into the future.

With Railfest 2017 just around the corner, I am sure some of you are eager to hear what is planned for this year's event. Norfolk Southern has begun charging groups to bring their equipment to Railfest. Obviously that is hurting our ability to get visiting equipment to the park. The Erie Lackawanna Dining Car Preservation Society has committed to bringing their recently acquired circus cars, the Museum of Industrial Heritage is bringing a small electric powered engine formerly used in slate quarrying and the Tri-State folks out of NJ are working on ways to bring some of their equipment to the event. Additionally we will host a Friday night concert with David Stone as part of First Friday and a Saturday evening night photo shoot. There is much more planned and of course, we couldn't put on such a huge event without all of you. I do hope you can find time to volunteer for all or part of the event.

See you at Railfest!

TRAIN & ENGINE Dick Roden

In the last couple of months there have been some promotions!

Tom McNamara and Tom Skrutski have been promoted to the position of Yard Conductor, Jerry Dziedzic and Mike Rinkunas have been promoted to the position of Student Engineer for the Yard, and Steamtown Preservation Specialist, Mike Theriault, has been promoted to the position Diesel Excursion Engineer.

Congratulations to all!!!

There will be another orientation for new volunteers wanting to enter Train and Engine service on Saturday, November 4, 2017. If you know someone who wants to become a volunteer, they can download an application from the Park's web site and give it to Kenny Ganz, Volunteer Coordinator.



NPS photo: K. Ganz



Rededication of the “Spirit of the American Doughboy” statue



NPS photo: K. Ganz

On the evening of June 14, 2017 Steamtown NHS hosted a rededication ceremony for the “Spirit of the American Doughboy” statue that was originally placed in Colonel Frank J. Duffy Memorial Park adjacent to the Harrison Avenue Bridge in May of 1940.

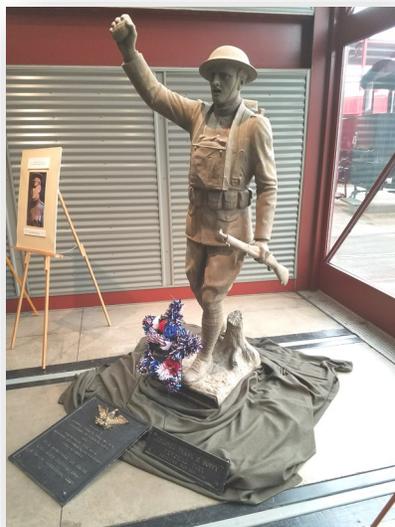
On account of the reconstruction of the bridge, the statue was moved to Steamtown for safe keeping in 2014.

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of America’s entry into WWI, it was decided to place Col. Duffy’s statue on display in the History Museum through November 2018.

Col. Duffy, a Scranton native, was hired by the Delaware Lackawanna & Western railroad as an electrician in 1905. From 1906 to 1908 he oversaw the Electric Department on the Buffalo Division of the DL&W, returning to Scranton in 1909.

The Declaration of War against Germany in April 1917, brought a patriotic fervor to the nation and by June 23, 1917, Duffy was appointed a Major and assigned to the U.S. Army’s 109th Engineer Regiment, part of the 28th Infantry Division. Ultimately promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel Duffy was killed in the line of duty on August 17th, 1918.

The statue of “The Spirit of the American Doughboy” was dedicated to Lieutenant Colonel Duffy and “those who have entered into a more beautiful life.”



NPS photo: K. Ganz



VIP Recognized for his Outstanding Work as Intern at Steamtown Randall Kasorek, Jr.

From April, 2016 to December, 2016, VIP Randall Kasorek, Jr. completed an internship at Steamtown National Historic Site as part of his course work at Penn State Worthington Scranton campus. His internship was in the divisions of Interpretation and Train & Engine Service. Randy is a 22-year-old full-time college student who as part of his internship worked on various programs that Steamtown has to offer, including the guided railroad train crew as well as car host interpretive programs and presenting tours of the Locomotive Shop to visitors. These tours are very detail oriented and require a great deal of research and understanding of railroad operations and equipment maintenance.



NPS photo: K. Ganz

Randy completed 240 hours for a total of 6 credits which he Reported to the head of Interpretation and Train & Engine Service to get credit for his VIP hours and to complete the requirements for his internship. Randy is determined, focused, and dedicated to Steamtown and the National Park Service. He has always loved coming to Steamtown ever since he was just 2 years old and volunteered at the park since 2010. Randy is a tremendous asset to Steamtown and always eager to learn about new things and continues to excel with his historical insight on all railroading programs.

In the past 7 years, Randy has accumulated over 1000 hours of service to Steamtown. He is familiar with the development and operation of both steam and diesel locomotives. Randy actually has 2 favorite locomotives at Steamtown, the Union Pacific Big Boy and Canadian National #3254. Randy grew up riding behind the #3254 which he says, “It’s a Beast!” and is probably why it is one of his favorites. Previous to Randy’s internship, he also reached a total of 500 hours of volunteer service to Steamtown and earned Master Ranger Corps. status.

We congratulate Randy on a job well done and to keep up his hard work in everything he does for both Interpretation and Train & Engine Service!

National ParkRx Day, Sunday, April 23, Noon-4:00pm



Steamtown NHS closed out National Park Week with *Scranton Limited* Yard Shuttles, our annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner, and participation in National ParkRx Day.

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 was 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.

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 shared with our visitors the incredible opportunities to get out and get active in NE PA. There was even be Master Gardeners to help green up your thumbs!

Bill Fischer
Chief of VS&RM



NPS photos: K. Ganz

Johnson Technical College Internship Program Welcomes Justin Sickler



NPS photo: K. Ganz

My name is Justin Sickler and I attend Johnson College. I am currently working on an associates degree in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering Technology. I am from Lemon Township and am a lieutenant of the Lake Carey Volunteer Fire Company.

I went straight into the Navy after graduating from Tunkhannock High School. I served for six years and was deployed seven times. I performed various duties; fueling aircrafts, fire suppression, and fleet force protection. After serving I was hired at the Skidder Shop in Tunkhannock and worked on logging equipment and gas industry equipment for four years. I learned a lot and was thankful for the experience there but I realized what I really wanted to do with my life was to be a machinist.

I am the fifth generation of my family to be in some way involved with railroading. My great great grandfather, Fred Rendle, was Chief Clerk of the Lehigh Valley's Coxton Yard. My great grandfather, Jim Rendle, worked in the diesel locomotive shops at Coxton Yard. My grandfather, Wade "Spike" Rendle, was a member of the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valley chapter NRHS, and the Railroad Museum of NEPA. My uncle, John Rendle, was involved with Steamtown during the move from Bellows Falls, VT. and now I am continuing their legacy on the Boston and Maine 3713 restoration.

As soon as I found out from Johnson that there was an opportunity to participate in an internship at Steamtown I jumped on the chance to gain some firsthand experience working on these historic locomotives, I am learning by the sides of people who have years of experience in various trades and gaining knowledge that you just can't attain in a classroom. I am helping on the restoration of the Boston and Maine 3713 by reconstructing the headlight. It was in rough shape so we had to rebuild most of it from scratch while reconditioning as many components as possible. During this project I have had to, not only shape and form sheet metal, but also make special tooling for the unique contours of the housing and rivets. I am hoping to have it completed before classes resume in August and before Railfest.



O&W News



photo: N. Barrett

Volunteers have begun working on the O&W 105. Repairs made to hand brake and rigging, broken windows removed to be re-glazed, underfloor area cleaned of a lot of dirt and about 90% of the graffiti removed.

Thanks to the O&W #105 volunteers for a job well done.

PS: Prime movers were checked out and barred over. Full evaluation at a later date

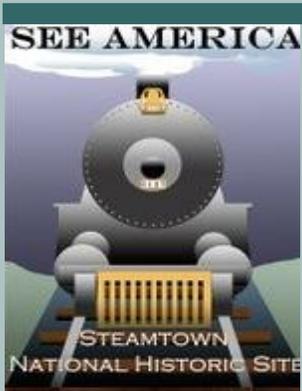
Yard Shuttle Times



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.



2017 Upcoming Events

Aug 25
NPS 101th Birthday!

Sept 2 & 3
Railfest

Oct 9
Special Steam Train to
Carbondale

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From the VIP Coordinator



“Volunteers are not paid not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless”. How true is that?

We’ve faced some difficult challenges this year without an excursion contract in place, but thanks to you folks, the park has been able to continue to provide an awesome experience for our visitors. From the expanded tours to the Caboose hops, to the “Shoots Special” we haven’t missed a beat.

As our paid staff levels decrease, volunteer levels must increase for STEA to remain true to our stated mission. If any of you folks can think of anyone that might be interested in volunteering for the park, please have them contact me at, kenny_ganz@nps.gov.

All divisions have work that needs to be done. Cultural Recourses, T&E Service, Car Hosts, Interpretation, Maintenance, Locomotive Shop/Restoration all are in need of help.

As you all know, you are the heart and soul of Steamtown NHS. Keep up the good work!

Kenny

STEAMTOWN WELCOMES

Ted Johnson

Howdy Folks,

Thank you all very kindly for welcoming me! Over the past 15 years in the NPS, I have been fortunate to have had varied and unique experiences working at such historic sites as Fort Frederica NM, Fort Sumter NM, Castillo de San Marcos NM, Virgin Islands NP & VI Coral Reef NM, Independence NHP and Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

Now, I am very excited to have the opportunity to join this “Team of Steel & Steam!”

I am looking forward to working with staff and volunteers to develop more extensive education programming ideas and provide opportunities for more diverse audiences make relevant connections with STEA and the NPS. I believe my experience at Ellis Island will enable us to share with our visitors more of the history and significance of immigration to this region.

In addition to having an awful lot to learn about railroading and steam locomotives, I am also very interested in discovering more about the diverse natural and cultural history and resources of this fascinating region. Thank you all for helping to make my "onboarding" and transitioning run as smoothly as possible!

Sincerely,

Ted Johnson



NPS photo: K. Ganz