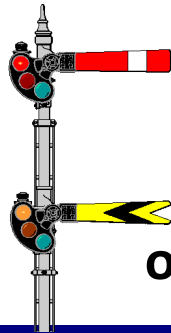


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# The Semaphore

## The Volunteer Newsletter of Steamtown National Historic Site

Volume 2, Issue 3

Fall 2017

### Railfest 2017

By Tim O'Malley



The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Railfest, conducted over the Labor Day weekend was one of our most unique events yet.

Running two days and two nights, there were more activities to attract young and old rail enthusiasts to the park. Railfest is run by a combination of the Steamtown staff and VIPs along with the Friends of the Northeast Railroading who are a collection of folks donating their time to promote, expand and execute the activities.

On Friday, September 1, visitors taking in the routine tours and activities of the park also got a treat in watching the various locomotives and cars being moved around the railroad yard and set in place for display.

The National Museum of Industrial History in Bethlehem brought a narrow gauge industrial locomotive that worked at a slate quarry in Pen Argyl, PA. Seth Corwin also prepared his live-steam train by the Maintenance of Way building offering rides to visitors.

At 5:00 the park closed, but the theater was re-opened at 7:00 for a live musical performance. David Stone returned once more for his Johnny Cash Experience show at 7:30. This was a way for Steamtown to be part of First Friday activities in downtown Scranton with 77 people attending.

One of the first activities on Saturday morning was the movement of visiting engine no. 19. This C424 was recently purchased by Tri State from the Morristown & Erie. The team spent most of the summer cleaning her up in preparation for the move to Scranton. All fired up, the diesel rolled onto the turntable and moved into her display space just before the opening ceremony.

Superintendent Conway led the opening remarks, honoring the grand marshal, Tom Nemeth, publisher and editor of "Railpace Newsmagazine." US Congressman Matt Cartwright (D-PA, 17<sup>th</sup> district) also spoke about his early career on the railroad, and the importance of transportation to keep local economies as well as the worldwide economy on the move. Mary Ann Savakinus, director of the Lackawanna Historical Society, announced the Alan Sweeney award recipient along with Judy Sweeney. This year, it was Mrs. Vee A. Pauli, presi-

dent of the Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Chapter of the NRHS, Railfest also happened to be Vee's birthday.

For Railfest, Baldwin # 26 is sporting Boston & Maine no. 3713's whistle, which is being heard under steam for the first time in several years. This will help in celebrating Constitution Day on

September 17.

Walking tours, railroad speeder rides, lectures of railroad history in the museum, photo exhibits and blacksmith demonstrations are only a few of the many things that took place during the remainder of Saturday and Sunday. The steam powered Scranton Limited ran simultaneously with the diesel powered (led by Lackawanna 663, also owned by the Tri-State Chapter) Caboose Experience. Delaware-Lackawanna RR no. 405 powered the Moscow excursion on both days, and as is tradition, held a photo run-by at the train station. More than one visitor commented that there is so much offered, even two days isn't enough time for them to experience it all. A new "selfie station" was set up near the Nay Aug Park train and the Archeology exhibit so people could take photos of themselves in some railroad gear to remember their visit. Three World War I re-enactors added to the commemoration of the Great War centennial over by the Scranton doughboy statue. Mark Nickerson, who portrayed a WWI Military Policeman, made a presentation in the theater on Sunday as well.

This year featured a new activity that may become a tradition for Railfest. A night photo session, which was coordinated by Steve Barry, editor of "Railfan and Railroad" Magazine, drew around 60 people to photograph trains in the dark with special lighting of the scenes. Three locations were selected for the night scenes. All attendees enjoyed the night action, and hoped for a repeat of this for the future. Summing things up, we realize how important our partners are in executing this huge event. Word is getting out on this being a must-see event, and almost every participant said they are preparing to return next year.



## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER Debbie Conway



**Happy Fall!**

A BIG thank you to all of our volunteers for helping making Railfest 2017 a great event. I received nothing but positive comments from our visitors that weekend. During the opening ceremony on Saturday, a new partnership agreement was signed between the NPS and the Iron Horse Society at Steamtown, Inc. The Iron Horse Society is a newly formed 501c3 not for profit organization created to serve as the official Friends Group and official fundraising partner for Steamtown. Roughly two years ago, the late Tom Shore spoke to me about the need for such a group and I whole heartedly agreed. He pulled together a group of dedicated volunteers to meet and discuss the concept and that started the ball rolling. Unfortunately, Tom was not with us at Railfest 2017 to see his idea come to fruition. This group is a membership based organization and will work to fundraise for high priority projects identified in an annual work plan which is agreed upon by both the park and the Society. We all know the number and type of projects at Steamtown are endless. The Society and the park have agreed to start small to build capacity and a track record of success. One thing on the 2018 work plan is to be able

to provide support to Railfest 2018 in order to bring visiting equipment to the site for the event. For more information on the Iron Horse Society at Steamtown, Inc., contact Norm Barrett.

Another big announcement at Steamtown is the discontinuation of entrance fees at the park. I am sure some of you are scratching your head saying above, you are talking about the need for funds to support the park and now you are discontinuing the entrance fee, that doesn't make sense. Actually it does when you do a deep dive in to the costs associated with collecting those fees. After a thorough analysis of our entrance fee operation, we realized it was costing the park more to collect the fees and manage the fee program than we were taking in. We will still be collecting fees for train rides and other special events such as Railfest through a cost recovery authority, but the entrance fee will be gone effective October 1, 2017. My hope is this will increase park visitation and ridership on some of our train rides especially the yard shuttle.

## TRAIN & ENGINE Dick Roden



# RRY!

## RAILROADS RIVERS AND YOU!

### **TO ALL TRAIN AND ENGINE CREWS:**

I am happy to report that Norm Barrett has been promoted to the position of Yard Fireman qualified on Baldwin 26 effective on Aug. 25, 2017.

Congratulations Norm!!

Ranger Ted Johnson along with Volunteers Caroline Dann, Vicky Castagna and Don Kretchmer are working together to get the park's 4th grade core curriculum program Railroads Rivers and You! (RRY!) back on track. They have been spreading the word to area schools about the program which incorporates common core standards in science, mathematics and language arts while exploring the history of railroading in the Lackawanna River Valley and its impact on the environment. For the fall season, program will be offered Monday-Thursday from September 18th-October 19th.

## RETIREMENT NEWS!

### Roger Samuels

By the time you all read this I will be riding the Gypsy Wind into retirement. I've actually spent 28 years here at Steamtown which includes the time I spent as a volunteer in the locomotive shop. Many changes have passed in my time here from working in the shop with no heat in the winter to seeing a roundhouse with no windows and hardly a roof. The changes have been dramatic and quite interesting.

I've worked with a lot of fine employees and volunteers and I am proud to say that during the mid to late 1990's that my men and I were the first steam locomotive crew to work the roundhouse since the 1930's. We had two shifts manning all three of our steamers, the men during the day time and the men who worked the night to make sure our steamers were ready for the next day's service. We've had some great excursions from double headed to triple headed steam trains going from North and South to East and West. Even though we are currently down to only one operating steam locomotive the potential here at Steamtown exists for an even brighter future. A lot of folks have come and gone but it is good to see that we are bringing on new employees and volunteers to help us keep those steel wheels on the steel rails.

As I look forward to decommissioning my alarm clock and missing all the finger gestures from the daily commuters on Interstate 81, I will always remember my time spent here at Steamtown NHS. We are an historic site like none other in the entire National Park System. I hope for all the best in health, relationships and life for each and every one of you.

Roger J. Samuels  
Trainmaster/DER/Rail Security Coordinator

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## IRON HORSE SOCIETY AT STEAMTOWN NHS OFFICIALLY BECOMES FRIENDS GROUP

### Initial Goals:

- Develop friends Group membership base
- Increase park volunteer membership
- Raise funds to advertise and promote the park
- Raise funds to bring visiting railroad equipment to the park for Railfest



Pictured here:  
Left to right: Dominic Tardogno, Iron Horse Society, Norm Barrett, Iron Horse Society and Superintendent Conway signing the official enabling document.

NPS photo: K. Ganz



### Andy Ottinger



NPS photo: K. Ganz

Andy Ottinger (of Highspire, PA) is in his 20th year of volunteering at Steamtown National Historic Site. Andy began volunteering in Interpretation/Visitor Services while he was attending Penn State starting in 1997 when he was 19 years old. At that time, he assisted with tours and acted as a car host on the excursion and yard trains.

Since 1998, Andy has been an active volunteer in the train and engine program as a yard and excursion train conductor. Knowing the railroad's that we operate on is a specialty of Andy's, and he helps teach annual re-certification classes for T&E folks on yard and route physical characteristics. Andy is also one of Steamtown's designated certifier of conductors (DSC) for yard and excursion promotion.

Andy is a 1998 graduate of Penn State Scranton Campus with an associate's degree in Architectural Engineering Technology and a 2000 graduate of Penn State Harrisburg Campus with a bachelor's of science degree in Structural Design and Construction Engineering Technology. Andy works at Gannett Fleming, Inc. in Camp Hill, PA, doing civil and highway engineering design work, primarily assisting Penn DOT projects in design and construction throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Outside of Steamtown, Andy also works part-time for the Middletown & Hummelstown Railroad (since 1998) as an engineer and conductor in both freight and tourist train services, and as a very part-time passenger/charter conductor for the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad. Away from the trains, Andy is active volunteer in several local civil engineering societies in the Harrisburg area, including mentoring students who have an interest in a career in engineering.





## AUGUST 13, 2017 RAILROAD MERIT BADGE

By Dr. Don Kretchmer

On August 13, 2017 Steamtown NHS conducted a Boy Scouts of America Railroading Merit Badge workshop where thirty scouts from various BSA Councils (NY, NJ, PA) accompanied with leaders had the opportunity to attain the Railroading Merit Badge. The full day workshop started with an orientation talk followed by instructional time in the Technology Museum. The workshop was conducted by NPS Ranger Ken Ganz and VIP Dr. Don Kretchmer, both are registered Railroading merit badge counselors. As part of their requirements, the Scouts also enjoyed a train excursion to the historic Gouldsboro Train Station where VIP Conductor John Sheerin held an Operation Lifesaver Class and discussed his job as a Conductor. To help the Scouts in fulfilling their merit badge requirements, they were provided with Railroading Merit Badge worksheets unique to Steamtown NHS. The worksheets were created by the NEPA Council, BSA for their 2016 Iron Horse Spring Camporee where 350 Scouts and leaders had a fantastic full day of railroading at Steamtown while passing requirements to achieve the railroading merit badge.



The worksheets have been adapted for Steamtown's use and now are an integral part of the workshop so Scouts can complete required prerequisites and on site work. The workshop concluded with a classroom wrap up and Ranger Ken and VIP Don reviewing the worksheets and signing off on the official BSA Merit Badge Blue Cards.

As always, we would like to thank our excellent train crew for a safe day on the rails. The program has been a great success with positive feedback and is planned to continue in the future.

# RAILFEST HIGHLIGHTS



## NEW FACES

Jessica  
Weinman



NPS photo: K. Ganz

### Hello Steamtown!

You may or may not know that I am the new Chief of Maintenance at Steamtown NHS. I moved here from Devils Tower National Monument, America's first National Monument located in Wyoming. I had the pleasure of being the Chief of Maintenance there for close to ten years. I have been working for the National Park Service (NPS) since 1999. I have had the wonderful adventure of working in five different parks. Steamtown is now my sixth NPS site. For over eight years I worked in the field performing a variety of trades then transitioning to management around 2008.

I chose the NPS as a career because it is an organization I believe in. The NPS is important to me. We preserve, educate, and expand our country's diverse resources, history, and culture. I enjoy the responsibility and challenge of contributing to the proper management and protection of park assets and resources. My goal is to implement environmentally and fiscally conscious programs through proactive planning, provide a safe and progressive workplace for employees and be a part of a team that actively aims to succeed in the preservation of the history and uniqueness of Steamtown NHS. I came aboard Steamtown two months ago. I am thrilled to be here, I learn something new every day and I look forward to what tomorrow brings.

## National Hartzog Junior Volunteer Award



Left to right: Mike Reynolds, Acting NPS Director, Aiden Schafer, recipient, and Kenny Ganz, Volunteer Coordinator

On Tuesday, August 1st, VIP Aiden Schafer travelled to Washington, DC. To officially receive the National Hartzog Junior Volunteer Award.

Aiden and his Mom were treated to an extensive tour of several monuments on the National Mall along with a tour of the U.S. Capitol. The award ceremony was held Tuesday evening at the Department of the Interior building capped off with reception for all the honorees.

We are very proud of Aiden for all the fine work he has done for STEA and thrilled to see his efforts recognized at the national level.

# RAIL SAFETY WEEK

SEPT 24-30

## THE PROBLEM

**EVERY THREE HOURS IN THE U.S., A PERSON OR VEHICLE IS HIT BY A TRAIN.**

- Nine out of 10 railroad-related fatalities result from vehicle-train crashes or pedestrian rail trespass incidents.
- In 2016, preliminary statistics show, there were more than 2,070 highway-rail grade crossing collisions nationwide. Approximately 260 people were killed and 830 were injured in grade crossing incidents.
- A motorist is 20 times more likely to die in a crash involving a train than in a collision with another motor vehicle.
- Because of their size and weight, trains can't stop quickly; the average freight train going 55 mph takes a mile or more to stop after emergency brakes are applied.
- When a train hits a car, it has the same impact as a car running over a soft drink can.
- More than 50 percent of crashes at public grade crossings happen where active warning devices (gates, lights, bells) exist.
- A train is 3 feet wider than the rail – if you are walking next to the tracks, you can still get hit.
- It is illegal for pedestrians to be on railroad tracks, trestles, equipment and property — trespassers are subject to arrest and fines.
- Trespassing on railroad tracks and property in 2016 resulted in approximately 491 fatalities and 494 injuries.
- More than 50 percent of the people who die walking on railroad tracks had drugs or alcohol in their system.

## BENEFIT LUNCHEON

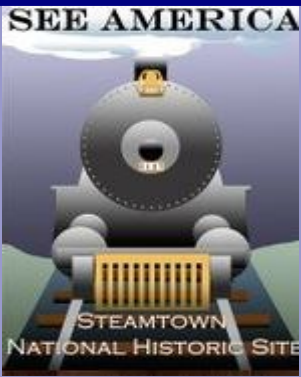
For the Staely Family  
To help offset medical expenses

When: Thursday, Oct 12, 2017 @ 12:00 p.m.  
Where: MOW Lunchroom  
Cost: \$7.00 per person

Please RSVP by October 10th to Michele (x5259), Paula S. (x5189), or Debby S. (x5182).

There will also be a Bake Sale to benefit the Staely's as well as a donation jar.





## From the VIP Coordinator



Hello!

Thank you all for contributing to a very successful Railfest 2017. In spite of the dismal weather, we had a surprising number of first time and repeat visitors. Our event was a hit in no small part to you, our cherished volunteers. From our Train & Engine service VIPs, Interpretative guides, Locomotive Shop VIPs and Special Event VIPs. You all made this year's Railfest an exceptional experience for our visitors.

However, it doesn't stop there. We have several special events coming up. Our Spooky Spectacular on October 28-29, the Holiday Trains on November 24-26, and activities at STEA associated with the Santa Train on December 2.

Again, we can't do these things without you. If anyone can spare some time to get involved with our upcoming events, please let me know.

Thank you for all you do to make Steamtown NHS what it is today.

Kenny

### 2017 Upcoming Events

Oct 28 & 29  
Spooky Spectacular

Nov 24—25  
Holiday Trains

Dec 2  
Santa Train

### FALL FOLIAGE EXCURSIONS

Oct 14 & 21—Moscow  
Oct 7—East Stroudsburg  
Oct 8—Tobyhanna  
Oct 9—Carbondale (steam)  
Oct 15—Delaware Water Gap  
Oct 22—Cresco  
Oct 29—Gouldsboro

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**RECORD**  
**SETTING**  
**SENIOR**  
**PASS**  
**SALES!**



### **By Bill Fischer**

Kudos to our staff and volunteers for skillfully navigating the summer avalanche of requests for the America the Beautiful (ATB) Senior Pass. From July 1 until the new ATB Senior Passes went into effect on August 28, our staff sold roughly 3600 lifetime passes to US citizens and permanent residents aged 62 years and older. Perhaps more challenging were the innumerable phone calls, some quite testy, that staff and VIPs fielded with questions about the pending cost changes.

Following the 2016 NPS Centennial, Congress directed that the price of the ATB Senior Pass, which had sold for \$10 for decades and which provided seniors free access to National Park Service sites and other federal recreation area benefits, be raised to \$80. To help ease the stiff increase in price, a new annual Senior Pass was established for \$20. Seniors could, and should, save their receipts for the annual passes since when they purchase their fourth annual pass for \$20, it will be converted into a lifetime pass (since four annual passes at \$20 each totals the \$80 cost for a lifetime pass).

Special thanks to our fee program manager, Bill McCarthy, for proactively ordering senior passes several times during the summer. By doing so, he helped STEA meet the unprecedented demand without having to turn away disappointed visitors. Fee collectors Tommy Parker and Chris Brandt ably bore the brunt of pass sales in our fee booth, at times keeping the booth open late to meet visitor demand.

With the passing of the deadline to sell the \$10 ATB Senior Pass, life in the STEA Fee Booth returned to normal... well, at least for five days until Railfest 2017 welcomed many more visitors.

Thanks again to all our staff and VIPs for being the courteous and pleasant faces and voices of STEA to those seeking information or purchase of the \$10 ATB Senior Pass. Three cheerful toots of the #26 whistle to you all!



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