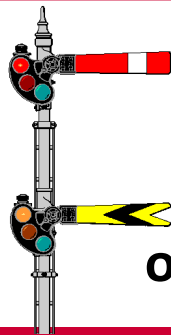


**In this issue:**

Charlie Liberto	1
Superintendent's Section	2
Train & Engine	2
Dingman Delaware 5th Grade Chorus	2
Missing Someone?	3
VIP Spotlight	3
2017 Santa Train	3
From the VIP Coordinator	4
Express to Impress	4

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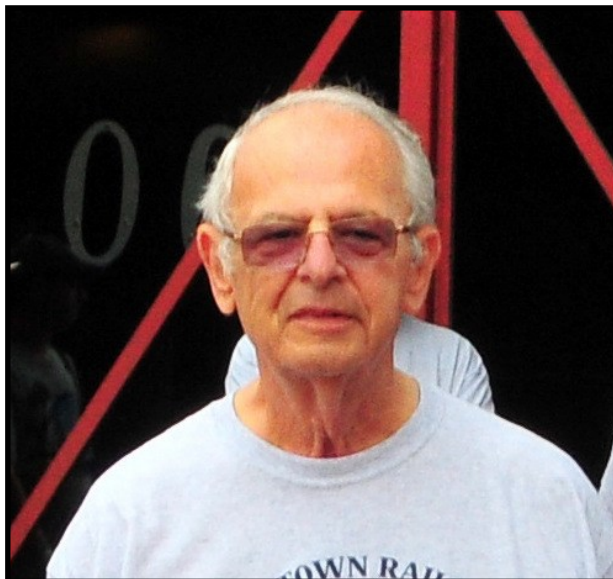
# The Semaphore

## The Volunteer Newsletter of Steamtown National Historic Site



Volume 2, Issue 4

Winter 2017



### Charlie Liberto, Railfest founder, passes

Only a few weeks after Railfest 2017 was complete, we at Steamtown heard the news of the passing of Charlie Liberto, who was the grand marshal of Railfest 2016, and one of the founders of the Railfest concept. He was 82 when he passed on September 21, 2017. Charlie lived in Langhorne, PA and began the early version of Lackawanna Railfest in East Stroudsburg. At the time, he was active in the restoration and preservation of the E. Stroudsburg tower. Railfest was a rail-themed show in a tent along the tracks with displays of equipment from the Delaware Lackawanna Railroad, plus tables featuring toy trains, artwork by area artists and sales by railroad clubs and historical societies. Steamtown NHS participated in 2004 and 2005.

By November, 2007, Charlie's Railfest idea was incorporated into Steamtown's schedule. It moved to Labor Day weekend the next year, and has become a key event on the calendar for railroaders and locals alike. Charlie and Steamtown Superintendent Kip Hagen formed the committee which includes many partners in preservation, and railroad societies. Railfest also gives us a chance to open parts of the park that many people don't know about. Along with other committee members, Charlie helped to found the Friends of the Northeastern Railroad, which provides technical assistance to the Railfest committee. Charlie loved steam locomotives, and was thrilled to be part of focusing attention on them both in the Steamtown yards and on the mainline. He kept approaching the railroads and locomotive owners about any way they could participate in his events.

Charlie will be missed by all of us at Steamtown. His help in getting Railfest off the ground makes the memories of past and future Railfests part of his legacy.





# SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

## Debbie Conway



Happy Holidays to all of our wonderful VIPs. I am happy to report about an exciting process we will enter into in January 2018. The Steamtown management team will be working with New Line Consulting to develop a strategic plan for the park. This is something I have felt we have needed since I arrived. Steamtown lacks several of the more typical planning documents such as a general management plan that you might find in other national park sites. Without that type of guiding document, it is easy to get off course.

January 23-25, the management team will meet off site to start this process. On January 24<sup>th</sup> a brainstorming session to include a core group of operational partners and representatives from our staff and volunteer ranks will join the management team to start to develop goals for the next 3-5 years for STEA. Then the management team, working with New Line, will massage those ideas into a working plan over the next several months.

In the upcoming week, we will be sending out a survey to our volunteers and other partners asking for input on three questions. This is your opportunity to provide input to the strategic plan. (You will also have opportunities to comment on the drafts of the plan as they are developed.) Please take a few minutes and respond to the survey. We really want your input to make Steamtown the greatest park in the NPS.

On another note, this will be the last Semaphore coordinated by VIP coordinator Kenny Ganz, as Kenny has decided to retire at the end of 2017. I would like to thank Kenny for all of his hard work and dedication toward the volunteer program. Kenny has really helped shape the Steamtown VIP program and will be missed. Kenny, good luck in retirement and who knows maybe you will want to come back and volunteer!

### TRAIN & ENGINE Dick Roden



When we start our annual classes in February 2018, we will have 12 new people entering Train and Engine Service. All have attended the mandatory orientation classes in May or November of this year.

There is a scheduled orientation class on Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018. If anyone knows of someone who would like to get involved in Train and Engine Service for the 2018 season, they can download an application from [www.nps.gov/stea](http://www.nps.gov/stea) and submit it to Tim O'Malley, the acting Volunteer Coordinator of Steamtown.

### Dingman - Delaware 5th Grade Chorus



On Saturday, December 16, 2017, visitors to the park were treated to a Christmas choral recital by the Dingman-Delaware 5<sup>th</sup> grade chorus.

About 30 visitors got into the holiday spirit by enjoying the many holiday tunes performed by the chorus directed by Mr. Brian Krauss.



# Missing Someone?



No doubt about it, 2017 has hit Steamtown hard with several long time VIPs, friends of the park and co-workers passing away. We count at least 10, and probably over a dozen have gone to their great reward since January. After such loss, we tend to look for ways to remember their contribution. Believe it or not, such a memorial board already exists.

Since the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the museum complex opening, the Interpretation division has had a memorial board on display in the Visitor Center. It started out as a temporary exhibit on foam core in 2005, but has become a more permanent fixture near the VC desk. The names of VIPs, employees and bookstore staff who have passed are listed on the board.

If your travels at the park don't often take you to the Visitor Center, stop by. We would like your input to keep it as correct as possible. With over 30 years of history, it is easy to forget those unforgettable characters of our past.

Tim O'Malley



## Samantha Kuczynski

I grew up in the Poconos, and spent most of my life unaware steam engines were still running, then 11 years ago on my first date with soon to be steady boyfriend Jerry I saw No. 3254 at Elmhurst. I enjoyed the sight, but it took a little while to really hook me. Now I can't imagine my life without trains. We even have my toddler great-niece following in my footsteps as a lady railfan.

In 2016 it was my idea for us to start volunteering at Steamtown. It has been a great journey learning railroad operations and meeting some really amazing people along the way. I have since started volunteering in the shop on Project 3713, and I can often be spotted taking pictures in my free time of the trains and crews.

I hope to one day make yard conductor, then work my way to fireman, and road conductor. I'm still not sure if I want to go for engineer, but I have plenty of time to figure it out.

Some of my non-train interests are, running my own business selling vintage clothing online, cooking and baking, looking for fossils and minerals, going through old garbage dump sites from decades ago, watching old horror movies, listening to many genres of music, popcorn, and of course, Godzilla.



# 2017 Santa Train



By Brian Wowak

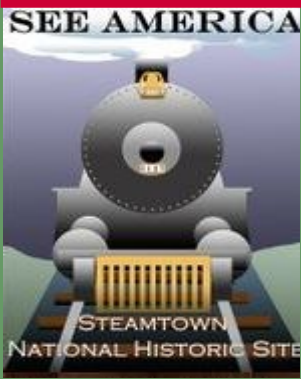
It was an early start for the crew on the last and best train of the year. Even before the engine crew was on duty at 6am, volunteers had arrived to put the finishing touches on Baldwin #26. Earlier in the week, Train & Engine volunteers had shined and polished every inch of her boiler jacket and tender. She looked so good they effectively shamed the maintenance department into putting a fresh coat of high-temp silver paint on her smoke box. The final touch: a big holiday wreath around the smoke box door.

The sun still hadn't risen as crews set out into the yard to prepare the train. They worked by lantern light, in a scene straight out of the glory days of the Scranton Yard. As the sun rose over the old Locomotive Shops, the frigid air made the steam from #26's exhaust condense into huge white clouds.

Sponsor banners were hung from the coaches with care, with the knowledge that Saint Nicholas soon would be there! While we waited, the crew was posed with #26's for a Holiday photo. Once the man with the bag was on board, we made our big entrance into Carbondale, a scene that would be repeated at each stop along the line, with cheering crowds, bands, and every kind of fanfare. Smiles were the order of the day as the locals were excited, some to see Santa, a few to see a real live steam locomotive come to their hometown!

With the communities along the line behind us, it was time for our big entrance into the core complex. With Santa in the cab of #26, and the Mayor of Scranton along too, #26 pulled across the turntable to the delight of the gathered crowd. As Santa made his way into the museum to meet his fans, #26 lingered on the table a while for photos with the crew. The train had run on schedule all day, delivering Santa and Holiday Cheer to everyone along the railroad who came out to see it. Despite being a very long day for the crew, we all left happy to have been a part of such a special trip.





## From the VIP Coordinator



We've all heard them say, "All good things must come to an end" Well, by the time you read this, my tenure at STEA will be just about over. After nearly 30 years, I'll be calling it a career.

I've seen a lot since 1988. From the ruins of the old DL&W yards to a truly world class railroad museum. I've had the privilege of photographically documenting the development, the restoration and daily activities of our site from the beginning. The progress that our park has made is in no small part on account of you, our cherished Volunteers.

I say "Our Park" because it belongs to all of us. Nowhere is there a more dedicated and enthusiastic group of people such as you, who fight to preserve our nation's railroad history. Of course, it's not always easy. Most things worthwhile aren't easy. But in spite of all the ups and downs, you folks have always been there for Steamtown NHS.

Over the past three decades, I've met and worked with some of the finest people anyone could ever hope for. You folks will always be near and dear to my heart.

I'll be turning over the responsibilities of STEA Volunteer Coordinator to Tim O'Malley as of December 31st. I'm sure most of you know Tim; he's been here almost as long as me. Tim will be assisted by Ted Johnson. While Ted has only been here since this past summer, he's had a long career in the NPS working with VIPs. I can rest easy knowing that all of you will be in good hands.

This is not to say I'm done with Steamtown. I've spent almost half my life at STEA and I'm not burning any bridges. You may see me around from time to time in a different capacity. But in the meantime, keep up the good work. You ARE Steamtown NHS!

Kenny

P.S. Tim's contact info is : [timothy\\_o'malley@nps.gov](mailto:timothy_o'malley@nps.gov) 570-340-5228

## Express to Impress: Steamtown's Holiday Express

A great tradition to kick-off the holiday season took place the three days following Thanksgiving. Steamtown's Holiday Express is a daytime train that replaced our evening event, "Slocum Hollow's Christmas Magic" in 2006. Our partner, then and now, the Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Chapter of the NRHS hosted Santa Claus and several of his North Pole friends at the Moscow train station.

Five sold-out excursions left Steamtown with three cars of cheerful passengers ready to meet the most famous resident of the North Pole. The Friday, 1:30 PM train had a complication with the tracks about midway to Moscow, and had to return to Scranton without reaching the station. But the other four trains made the round trip, and our "elves" kept riders entertained. With help from students of Abington Heights High School, Christmas carols were sung throughout the train on the out-bound journey.

Once in Moscow, there were photo opportunities to meet with the train crews, to take photos of the train, and to take family pictures with Santa Claus. Crafts and games were available, along with model trains in both O and HO scales. A small gift shop for stocking stuffers, and the regular menu of coffee, tea, and many snacks filled out the items available for sale at the station.

Many families look forward to these trains so much that they are still calling, hoping that our schedule will expand another week or two. It is a wonderful chance for families to get together and share a memorable multi-generational experience.



### 2018 Upcoming Events

Christmas and New Years Day  
site closed

Dec 31—Winter Hours (10-4)  
begin

Jan 23-25—Strategic Planning  
Workshop

Apr 1— Regular Hours (9-5)  
begin

Apr 21-29—National Park Week

Apr 29—National Park Rx Day

May 5—T&E Orientation

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