

Steamtown National Historic Site News Release

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Mark Brennan 570-340-5244

Steamtown Winter Lecture Series Continues In February Community's Greatest Historic Asset to Host Many Speakers

Scranton takes on a new level of education in February as the National Park Service continues its popular Winter Lecture Series on select Saturdays and Sundays, pleasing the general public as well as railroad historians. Guest speakers provide lectures, slide shows and powerpoint presentations on various subjects. All programs take place in the Park's Theater, located in the museum complex.

On Saturday, February 4, 2006 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Steamtown Park Ranger Ken Ganz holds the floor with a three-hour seminar and practice session on Railroad Photography. Those attending will learn the basics of general photography, plus skills in creative lighting and composition to make photos more dramatic. Mr. Ganz was the first park ranger hired by the NPS at Steamtown in 1988, and has photographed its development from an abandoned railroad yard to a premier National Park Service unit that highlights the Industrial Era in America. For no additional charge, other than Steamtown park admission, this course is offered to all, with reservations needed. Contact group reservation Park Ranger Glenn Smith at (570) 340-5339, or glenn_smith@nps.gov to reserve a space. Amateur and professional photographers are welcome.

Tom Nemeth, editor and publisher of Railpace Newsmagazine, returns to the lecture series with another of his slide programs highlighting the "Lehigh Valley RR from Jim Thorpe to Sayre, PA 1964-1976" covering perhaps the most colorfully painted freight trains ever, and the beautiful area this rail line passed through, in the final years before becoming a portion of the Conrail system. Mr. Nemeth, who resides in Greentown, PA, is a New Jersey native. His programs are at 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM on Sunday, February 5, 2006.

The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, provides a guest speaker for Saturday, February 11, 2006 presentation of “America on the Move – The New Smithsonian Gallery on Transportation in America, 1876 to 2000.” Dr. William L. Withuhn, Curator of Transportation for the Smithsonian, will discuss the new exhibit, its artifacts, and the crafting of a compelling display to bring home the impact of all aspects of transportation. Two viewings of this lecture are offered, at 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. Mr. Withuhn also volunteers at Steamtown NHS as a locomotive engineer during the steam season.

Saturday, February 18 highlights a returning favorite of the Winter Lecture Series. Frank Etzel is an IBM computer systems administrator and resident of Vernon, New Jersey. Mr. Etzel produces several multi-media slide programs, the latest of which is simply titled “Railroads, Then and Now.” 2006 marks the third appearance of Mr. Etzel at the Steamtown Theater, each time offering a new slant on the subject. These programs also begin at 1:00PM and 3:00 PM.

The amazing transformation of Steamtown, from a temporary tourist train in spotty locations of New England to the National Park it is today, will be discussed with a slide program on Sunday, February 19, 2006. “F. Nelson Blount’s Legacy” takes place at 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. Park Ranger Tim O’Malley explores the forces that brought about this new concept of a National Park during the program. Mr. O’Malley has served as an Interpretive Park Ranger at Steamtown since 1990, watching the construction and development of the park. Being a Scranton native, he accepted the challenge of producing the Grand Opening celebrations of the new museums in the summer of 1995.

“The Demise of the Baldwin Locomotive Works,” takes place only at 1:00 PM on Saturday, February 25, 2006. Bernard Gasper, a volunteer with Steamtown NHS, has created a PowerPoint presentation that aims to explore the reasons for the Baldwin Company’s post-World War II decline and eventual demise in the 1970s. Mr. Gasper’s analysis of economic forces and managerial decisions at Baldwin color the program with almost an insider’s view of the workings of the company, which made its last locomotive in 1956. In addition to being a life-long railroad enthusiast, his wife, Jill, is a great-great-granddaughter of a Baldwin Locomotive Works boilermaker.

Sunday, February 26 highlights “Fallen Flags – The Anthracite Railroads” whose principal commodity was anthracite coal from Northeast Pennsylvania. Featured in the presentation by Dan Gallo Sr. are the New York, Ontario and Western Railroad, Erie Lackawanna Railroad, Central Railroad of New Jersey, Lehigh Valley Railroad, Delaware & Hudson and Reading Railroad. Dan Gallo, a retired Advertising Director has given dozens of slide and video presentations to historical societies and community groups since 1970. He has also been featured on radio and TV in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties, New York and is viewed an expert on the Anthracite Railroads. The programs begin at 1:00PM and 3:00 PM.

Many visitors who take in these lectures find a connection to the past that is not always available simply by traveling on a train. The Steamtown staff is happy to provide a range of ways the steam era of railroading affects our lives today. Daily tours of the locomotive shop in the former Lackawanna Railroad buildings offer the chance to see preparations for the future. Locomotive and coach repair is ongoing throughout the year, with a heavier emphasis on long-term repairs during the colder months.

Located in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Steamtown National Historic Site is open from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM in January, 2006. From I-81, follow exit 185 (Central Scranton Expressway); follow signs to the main entrance at Lackawanna Ave. and Cliff Street.

Additional details regarding interpretive and educational programs and activities and weather related cancellations may be obtained by calling (570) 340-5200 or toll free (888) 693-9391, or by visiting the Steamtown web site at www.nps.gov/stea.

Editor’s Note: Photos, slides and digital images are available upon request.

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