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The Ambassadors' Update

A Monthly Newsletter from the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority

January 2009



ABOUT US

The Ambassadors' Update keeps you up to date on the news of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA), a National and State Heritage Area that preserves and promotes Northeastern Pennsylvania's historic, cultural, economic, and natural resources.

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FUNDERS

LHVA would like to thank the following funders for their generous support for our

Welcome!

Welcome to LHVA's e-newsletter, *The Ambassadors' Update*. Beginning in January 2009, LHVA has changed the format of its monthly newsletter to an electronic publication in order to minimize costs and to streamline the newsletter's production schedule. Please feel free to forward this newsletter to help spread the word about what is happening in the Lackawanna Heritage Valley.

LHVA Loses Friend and Leader

On December 5, LHVA's beloved Chairman, Alan Sweeney, passed away after a courageous struggle with cancer. He had been appointed to LHVA's Board of Directors in 2000, and served as the Board Chair since 2004. Alan was a tireless advocate, a dedicated worker, a brilliant historian, the author of several books on local history, a champion of LHVA, and our dear friend.

Alan devoted thousands of hours to the mission of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley for the past eighteen years. He also played critical roles in the growth of the Lackawanna Historical Society, the Albright Memorial Library, the Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Delaney Delacy Guard, the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, and numerous other charitable and civic organizations.

In October 2008, Alan was the recipient of the "2008 Individual Professional Leadership Award" from the Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations. He was honored at the Lackawanna Historical Society's annual dinner in September with a joyous community celebration to recognize his work and the award he so richly deserved.



Alan Sweeney (r) with friends, from left, Kip Hagen, Superintendent of Steamtown National Historic Site, Natalie G. Solfanelli, LHVA Executive Director, Dominic Keating, LHVA Volunteer.

projects and programs, as well as for the Lackawanna Greenway and Lackawanna River Heritage Trail.

National Park Service

PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

PA Department of Transportation

Lackawanna County

PPL Corporation

OSM/VISTA & ACCWT

Private Funders

Alan epitomized the individual who makes a profound difference in the life of a community. His passing saddens us, but his legacy is vibrantly alive through the many projects and programs he developed and fostered in our region. These include the Santa Train and the Heritage Explorer Train programs in the Mid-Valley and Carbondale, Steamtown National Historic Site's popular train excursions to Tobyhanna and Moscow, the installation and restoration of two beautiful monuments on Courthouse Square in Scranton, many services at the Scranton Public Library, the meticulous renovations at the Catlin House, and of course, all of the wonderful programs at the Lackawanna Historical Society.

LHVA Welcomes New Board Member

In January, the Lackawanna County Commissioners appointed Kurt Bauman to serve on LHVA's Board of Directors. An Olyphant resident, Kurt is the Government Services Manager of the Community and Government Services Division of the Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance, located in Pittston, PA. Kurt manages the NEPA Rural Planning Organization program, the Local Government Energy Assistance Program, and the Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development Regional Action Plan Initiative. He also oversees the Northeastern Pennsylvania Nonprofit & Community Assistance Center Program (NCAC), a 501(c)3 nonprofit affiliate of NEPA. Welcome, Kurt!

Staff Promotion

LHVA is pleased to announce that Beverlyann Liuzzo was promoted to the position of Assistant Fiscal Director effective January 1, 2009. Bev has been with LHVA since 2003, and has served as an Administrative Assistant in the fiscal department. Congratulations, Bev!



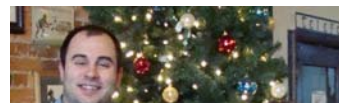
50 Years of Service Celebrated



LHVA Contract Manager John "Jack" Carling recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his involvement in Pennsylvania government service. After serving in the Korean War, Jack began his career in government in 1958 at the Scranton Redevelopment Authority. In 1972, he moved to the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, and he retired from that agency in 1995. Shortly thereafter, he began to work part-time for LHVA where he oversaw the \$13 million renovation of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Center in Mayfield, now the location of Saint Rose Academy. Jack continues to lend his expertise to LHVA, and he is a particularly important voice in the development of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail. Congratulations, Jack!

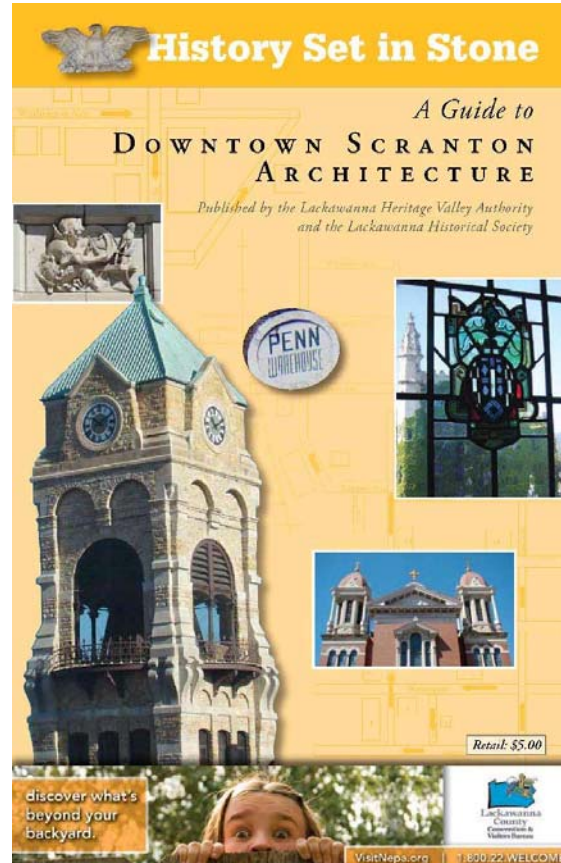
LHVA and Partners Welcome Two OSM/VISTAs

In December, Christopher Bludgus (left) and Lindsey Ritchey (right) joined the LHVA team as part of the Office of



Surface Mining/Volunteers in Service to America (OSM/VISTA) program. The two OSM/VISTAs will assist LHVA and its partners, the Lackawanna County Conservation District (LCCD), the Lackawanna River Corridor Association (LRCA), with several projects. At LHVA, Lindsey and Chris are organizing a teacher watershed education workshop, researching information for LHVA's website and environmental education programs, assisting with planning efforts for the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail, and facilitating LHVA's new Ambassadors' in Action volunteer corps. Welcome, Lindsey and Chris!

Scranton Walking Tour Booklet Released



LHVA, the Lackawanna Historical Society, and the Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors' Bureau recently released their new publication, "History Set in Stone: A Guide to Downtown Scranton Architecture," an annotated walking tour of the city. The twenty-page booklet provides maps, tour routes, and information on the historical and architectural details of many beautiful commercial and residential buildings in Scranton. Copies are available at the Visitors' Center on Montage Mountain, as well as at several downtown businesses. Sarah

Piccini, LHVA's Program Officer/Interpretation and Preservation Specialist, did a great job compiling and editing the booklet.

LHVA to Conduct Lackawanna Greenway Plan and Trail Feasibility Study in 2009

LHVA is pleased to announce that it was awarded a Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grant of \$75,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and



Natural Resources (DCNR) for the "Lackawanna Greenway Plan, Lackawanna River Heritage Trail (LRHT) Feasibility Study, and CNJ Trail Extension Master Site Plan."

The Lackawanna Greenway is a system of interconnected trails, parks, and open spaces along the Lackawanna River. The primary trail in the Greenway is the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail (LRHT), a multi-use recreational trail that closely follows the river for 40 miles from Forest City to the confluence of the Lackawanna and Susquehanna Rivers at Duryea and Pittston.

The LRHT has twelve sections, four of which are improved and open to the public: the D&H Trail (9.2 mi) and the NY O&W Trail (.7 mi) in the Upper Valley, the O&W Mid-Valley Trail (4.0 mi), and the Scranton CNJ Trail (1.5 mi). Four sections are under development: the Powdermill Trail in Jermyn-Archbald, the Scranton Levee Trail, the Downtown Scranton Riverwalk, and the Scranton CNJ Trail Extension. The remaining trail sections are in the early planning stages.

The Lackawanna Greenway Plan and LRHT Feasibility Study is a priority project for LHVA to develop the Lackawanna Greenway and the entire LRHT as a cohesive unit. With DCNR's support, this project will accomplish the following:

- * Develop a comprehensive assessment of the Lackawanna Greenway;
- * Conduct a feasibility study for each undeveloped section of the LRHT to propose trail routes, to assess acquisition issues, and to prepare cost estimates;
- * Conduct a feasibility study for each section of the LRHT that is either under development or improved, to determine maintenance and future enhancements;
- * Develop a Master Site Plan for the Scranton CNJ Trail Extension;
- * Identify thematic spur trails in the Greenway using LHVA's Heritage Explorer program;
- * Outline a detailed action plan for the immediate implementation of the study's recommendations;
- * Conduct an extensive campaign to share the results of the study with the public.

Cuts to Federal and State Funding Hit Close to Home

In this challenging economic environment, heritage areas have experienced significant funding cuts at the state and federal levels. As a result, LHVA has enacted changes to its Partnership Grants Program for 2009. In the meantime, please be assured that all current grant commitments will be fulfilled.

As a result of these circumstances, grants this year will be more competitive than in previous years. LHVA will continue to accept grant applications, but alternative plans should be in place in the event that LHVA is unable to provide funding for your project.

In the past nine years, LHVA has provided \$2,641,759 in funding through its Partnership Grants Program to support projects and programs in the areas of place-based education, interpretive

programming, historic preservation, cultural conservation, community trails, and community and economic development. This funding is an investment in Northeastern Pennsylvania that stimulates the region's economic development, enhances tourism initiatives, strengthens the capacity of community organizations, and increases the quality of life for area residents.

LHVA recognizes that many organizations rely on LHVA grants to implement excellent projects and programs. We will continue to explore additional funding sources, and are hopeful that the gap in funding will be closed and we will be able to reinvigorate our Partnership Grants Program in the future.

If you have a project in mind, please give us a call to discuss your idea.

Santa Train a Roaring Success!

Saturday, December 6, 2008, marked year eleven for the "Christmas in a Small Town" program, also known as Santa Train, a favorite holiday event in the Lackawanna Heritage Valley. Riding in style aboard a train from Steamtown National Historic Site, Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and their helpers arrived in Carbondale, Archbald, Jessup, Olyphant, and



Santa and Mrs. Claus are greeted in Archbald at their arrival on the Santa Train.

Dickson City to welcoming crowds. Each community held a celebration with activities, treats, and time for the kids to visit Santa. Despite the biting wind, a record number of 2,355 people turned out for the event, an increase of thirty-five percent from the previous year's 1,755 attendees.

It takes a team of community partners to pull together such as large event. LHVA would like to send a shout of appreciation to everyone who helped to make this event such a wonderful success:

- * Archbald Van Pool - Ken Propst,
- * Carbondale Business Association,
- * City of Carbondale, Archbald, Jessup, Olyphant, and Dickson City,
- * City of Scranton Recreation Department - Sandra Opshinsky
- * Delaware Lackawanna Railroad Co., Inc. - Lorie Ransom
- * Edventures Consulting - Thomas McHugh and Susan McMullin,
- * Entertainers: the Doug Smith Quartet, juggler Rob Smith, and the Valley View High School Band,
- * First Liberty Bank and Trust,
- * Greater Carbondale Chamber of Commerce,
- * Jessup 21st Century,
- * Lackawanna County Commissioners - Michael Washo, Corey O'Brien, and A.J. Munchak,
- * Lackawanna County Office of Arts and Culture - Maureen McGuigan,
- * Lackawanna Historical Society - Mary Ann Moran-Savakinus

- and Bob Savakinus
- * LHVA Volunteer Extraordinaire - Dominic Keating
 - * Media partners: WNEP-TV, WBRE-TV, the Times Tribune, and the Valley Advantage Newspaper,
 - * Old Forge Bank,
 - * Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Railroad Authority - Larry Malski and Charlene Doyle,
 - * Duncan Perry,
 - * Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and their helpers,
 - * Steamtown National Historic Site - Kip Hagen and Mark Brennan,
 - * Steamtown NHS's top-notch train crew - Bob Patterson, Bob Tomaine, Leo Czereck, and Amy Sturdevant,
 - * And the late Alan Sweeney, whose vision inspired the Santa Train.

Cold Conditions Perfect for Ice Harvest Festival



Historic ice saws were used to score the ice for easier cutting into smaller block for storage.

On Saturday, January 17, a historic steam locomotive transported 344 passengers from Steamtown National Historic Site to Tobyhanna for the annual Ice Harvest Festival. Passengers who braved the bitter cold were transported to Mill Pond #1 for an interactive ice cutting demonstration using historic tools. The ice blocks were loaded into an authentic ice house, where they will remain through the summer months. There were also tours available of the Village of Tobyhanna and the Coolbaugh Township Historical Association Museum. Members of the Historical Association and

Pocono Mountains Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society were on hand with answers (and hot chocolate!) throughout the day.

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