Hurricane Sandy delivered a knockout punch to the Northeast at the end of October, and Thomas Edison NHP was not spared. Landscape and buildings suffered extensive damage, including uprooted trees, downed power lines, and broken windows. A power outage closed the park for almost two weeks. Here is a photo album of the disaster.

The park was closed from October 29 to November 1, but Maintenance and Protection staff worked tirelessly during that time to clean up, remove debris, shepherd contractors and public utility workers, check supplies, and maintain security. Many thanks to Maintenance team Charly Magale, Walter Baginski, Arnold Griffith, Ricky Suarez, and Herc Suydam, and Protection Rangers Alex Whitten, Eddie Grimes, and Michael Hanna. Assistant Superintendent Terri Jung was on-site coordinating the response.
Volunteers Contribute 5000 Hours in FY 2012

Our volunteers and interns contributed almost 5000 hours to Thomas Edison NHP during the fiscal year that ended on September 30.

In November 2011, the park received the 2011 NPS Accessibility Achievement Award for Educational Leadership. In FY2011, the park received Special VIP Funds to offer Disability Awareness Workshops. Volunteers helped plan these workshops and were among the attendees. The workshops addressed program needs of visitors on the autism spectrum and visitors who are blind or visually impaired. This was the first time the award was given for educational leadership.

Volunteer hours declined 34% in FY12 in part because volunteers moved away or began new jobs (Congratulations to you!) and were unable to volunteer as frequently. Also, delays in completing background checks may have depressed volunteer hours. These checks are required for all curatorial and interpretation volunteers who work with the museum collections or may be alone in an historic building.

Our internship programs foster connections between a younger generation and parks through a series of diverse park experiences. Internships create a pathway to NPS employment with a focus on diversifying the workforce. Our partnership with the Edison Innovation Foundation brings us five high school summer interns from Seton Hall Preparatory School who gain experience in all program areas. Over the years, 14 Seton Hall Prep graduates have gone on to fill 39 seasonal appointments in the park. We have also developed an inter-disciplinary internship for college students in which they gain experience in the interpretation and curatorial programs. They conduct research with primary resources in the archives and museum collection to develop interpretive programs and museum exhibits as their final projects.

FY 2012:  Total VIP hours: 4,954  Volunteers:  65
FY2011:   Total VIP hours: 7,561 hours Volunteers:  74

Our high-achievers this year were:

Gaye Olin, 455 hours
Arthur Gordon, 339 hours
Tom Hilmer, 330
Evelyn Gurland, 256
Yvan Beausoleil, 247 hours
CJ Magale, 160 hours
Nancy Farley, 120 hours
Harry Roman, 112 hours
Robert Sprecher, 106 hours
Harvey Cohen, 103 hours
Amy Trimarco, 98 hours

Special thanks to everyone who volunteered at Thomas Edison NHP this year!
Edison Laboratory Celebrates 125th Anniversary

On November 17th, the park began a week-long celebration of the 125th anniversary of Thomas Edison’s Laboratory with a symposium entitled “Thomas Edison: 125 Years in West Orange.”

The program addressed several topics: Edison’s relevance today, the creation of the Edison advertising “brand,” the preservation of the park and its collections, and the nineteenth-century origins of audio. A discussion with the audience followed. The day ended with a wax cylinder recording demonstration.

On Sunday, the Friends of Thomas Edison NHP sponsored “Explore Audio with Electronic Music Pioneer Larry Fast” at the West Orange Public Library. Over Thanksgiving weekend, visitors could stop in Building 4 and see documents dealing with the (contentious) construction of the Laboratory complex in 1887.

Archivist Lenny DeGraaf discussed Edison’s role as an innovator and his ongoing importance today. His colleague Ed Wirth presented images of Edison’s “homemade” advertising.

Supervisory Museum Curator Michelle Ortwein reviewed several preservation projects that had taken place over the past few years, from conservation of individual artifacts at Glenmont to landscape rehabilitation and building repairs.

We’ve reproduced some of the small, delicate Christmas cards that were fashionable in the 1910s and 1920s. Mina Edison received hundreds over the years and saved them in several scrapbooks that are now in the archives.

“The stockings were hung by the chimney with care.”

We’ve reproduced some of the small, delicate Christmas cards that were fashionable in the 1910s and 1920s. Mina Edison received hundreds over the years and saved them in several scrapbooks that are now in the archives.

“...was hung by the chimney with care...”
The Lab Notebook is a quarterly publication of Thomas Edison National Historical Park. Printed on recycled paper.

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www.nps.gov/edis Click on “Support the National Park Service”

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Join us for Holidays at Glenmont
Friday—Sunday through January 6
Additional dates: Wednesday—Thursday December 26 and 27

Edison wears a festive, hand-drawn lab coat and garland for the park Holiday party after work on December 12.

All of us at Thomas Edison NHP hope you have a happy and safe holiday season.