



The Lab Notebook

Park Hosts Accessibility Workshops



Taking a sightless walk through Bldg. 5 during the workshop on welcoming visitors with visual impairments.

During two days in August, over 45 representatives from 24 different national and state parks, museums, and local historic sites joined staff and volunteers from Thomas Edison National Historical Park in attending two accessibility workshops hosted by the Park. The first, on August 2, focused on *Welcoming visitors who are blind or visually impaired to your site*. The second

workshop on August 9 addressed *How to welcome visitors on the Autism Spectrum to your cultural institution or site*.

Each workshop was presented in two parts. The morning sessions featured three speakers. The first two presenters covered general awareness information on the topic, use of terminology, best practices for providing service,

Superintendent Greg Marshall Is Retiring

After almost four years at Edison, Greg Marshall is retiring from the National Park Service on August 31.

Greg came to Edison after serving two years as the Superintendent of Sagamore Hill, the home of Theodore Roosevelt. He previously served for 18 years as director of the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry.

Everyone at the Park is sad to see Greg leave, but grateful for his leadership and vision at the time of our Grand Opening. We wish him much happiness in retirement. Greg's last "Superintendent's Message" is on page 2.

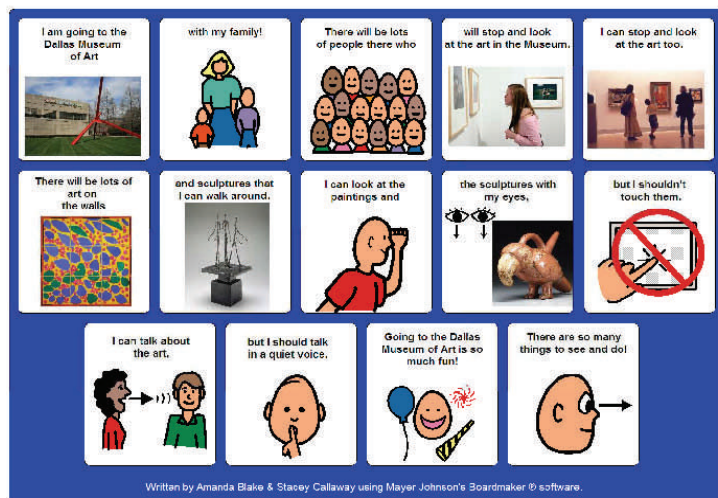
and interacting with visitors and adapting educational programs to meet the audience's needs. The third presenter was a museum professional who discussed a successful program that used the information presented.

The afternoon sessions focused on those who would be developing or leading programs and tours. By using the park as a classroom, participants learned how to implement the information gleaned from the morning session and develop techniques and ideas for creating interpretive programs at their own sites.

Morning and afternoon sessions at both workshops were recorded and will be edited and made available on DVD as training aids for staff and volunteers within NPS and other organizations.

Overall, the goal of the workshops was to gain a greater awareness of welcoming guests with disabilities to our sites and ultimately to recruit volunteers with disabilities. The workshops were made possible through a Volunteers-in-Parks Special Fund program. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with some participants commenting that these were the best workshops they had ever attended. If further funding can be secured, Park staff hope to hold additional accessibility workshops next year.

My Visit to the Dallas Museum of Art



This handout helps families prepare children with autism for a visit to an art museum. Edison staff will adapt it for use here. (A pdf of this document can be found on the website of the Dallas Museum of Art under Family/Access Programs.)

Message from the Superintendent

This is my farewell message to our employees, friends, partners, and volunteers of Thomas Edison National Historical Park.

I have had the privilege of serving at the Park for almost four years and working for the National Park Service for the past ten years. I have considered my time with NPS as an extraordinary second career. As I retire, I have worked in the park business for over forty years.

As I look back, I couldn't have chosen a better career in public service. Despite the challenges, the joy of working in a profession where we get to see people at their best has been an experience I will cherish.

I have learned a great deal from the Park staff and all of you. At the very least, I truly recognize what a unique and special place this is in the National Park System. Any achievements and progress made at the Park are a result of your passion, commitment, and dedication. In some small way I hope I left you better than I found you.

All the best!

Greg Marshall

Thomas Edison National Historical Park was established to preserve and protect Thomas Alva Edison's West Orange Laboratory, home, and collections for the education and inspiration of people worldwide.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Introduction to bird watching.

The program topics included Victorian Lifestyle, Fun Outdoors, Sound Recording, and the Invention Process. The first two programs took place at the Glenmont Estate. On those days campers got a chance to take a run for it in the servants' scramble relay and explore the estate's grounds on an outdoor scavenger hunt.



Wringing out the wash, just as the Glenmont staff did more than a century ago.



Molding tin foil into the shape of their own inventions.

There were no hiking trails or camp songs at Camp Edison. Yet, one thing is certain; the camp was a unique program series that will give rise to a new kind of camper.

At the sound recordings session this camper is making his own guitar.



Camp Edison 2011: A New Kind of Camp

At the peak of our summer season, Thomas Edison National Historical Park welcomed kids to the third annual Camp Edison program series. Although there were no tents or sleeping bags, participants learned about the National Park Service, its mission, and the special resources of the Park. Exploration, discovery, and the spirit of innovation were at the heart of the four morning programs.

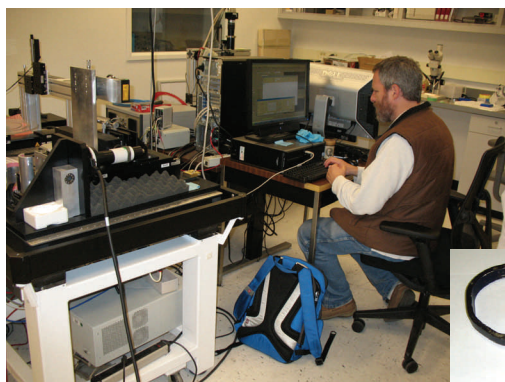
The following day's activities were held at the Laboratory Complex. Campers learned about sound recording as they constructed their own electric guitars. The series concluded with a program about the invention process during which campers developed their own inventions. There was a lot of fun to be had with the wide variety of activities, crafts, games, demonstrations, and tours.

A Voice From the Past

Edison's talking doll made news recently when a 123-year-old recording made for the doll's voice could once again be heard, thanks to the latest advances in sound technology.

In May, Museum Curator Jerry Fabris took a small ring-shaped cylinder recording to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory near Berkeley, California. There, Carl Haber, an expert in the latest 3D scanning technology, "lifted" the sound from its misshapen source and reproduced a 12-second recording of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." The recording was made in 1888 for Edison's failed talking doll business, and is believed to be the earliest surviving commercial recording, that is, a recording intended to be sold to the public.

News of the recovery attracted press coverage from CNN, the BBC, the *Washington Post*, Associated Press, the *Daily Mail* (London), National Public Radio, and SCIENCE Magazine, among others. Inquiries from around the world, including India, Australia, and Scandinavia, to name a few, poured into the Park.



Carl Haber prepares to scan the recording.



The (not quite) round recording will soon be on exhibit.

Frank L. Dyer Diaries Donated to Park

The Park archives has received a donation of the 1899 and 1906 diaries of Frank L. Dyer. An attorney from Washington, D.C., Dyer handled Edison's patents in the 1890s. In 1903 he became Edison's general counsel, managing all of Edison's patent and legal affairs, including several contentious lawsuits related to the phonograph business. In 1908 he became president and general manager of the National Phonograph Company and president of the Motion Picture Patents Company. He played an important role in the 1911 formation of Thomas A. Edison, Inc. Dyer also co-authored Edison's 1910 official biography, *Edison: His Life and Inventions*. Dyer left Edison in December 1912 to pursue other business interests.

The two manuscript diaries offer revealing glimpses of Dyer's personal and business affairs. Because he was not closely associated with Edison in the 1890s, the earlier diary has only sporadic references to the inventor. Dyer interspersed comments on his legal and patent work with notes on the weather, his health, family events, trips to Atlantic City and Europe, and his golf game (he was an avid golfer).



Frank L. Dyer (left, front row) with Edison and members of the Motion Picture Patents Co., 1908.

The 1906 diary contains more detailed observations about Edison. On January 2 Dyer wrote "Edison very nearly poisoned himself yesterday with prussic acid and had to go out in the air to be revived." A few days later Dyer recorded his conversation with Edison about stock market speculation. Dyer also wrote about the relationship between Edison's son, Thomas Jr., and his wife Beatrice and noted Edison's comments on the drinking habits of his father, Samuel.

These daily observations of a significant member of Edison's business organization are a welcome addition to the archives. They will provide researchers with new perspectives on Edison's work at the beginning of the twentieth century.

More Donations for the Museum Collection



In April, Peter Dilg of Baldwin, New York, donated a Western Electric candlestick telephone to the Park. The artifact is the same type of telephone used by Clarence Hayes, manager of the Edison Laboratory Music Room, in a photograph taken in 1917. Park curators used this photograph as a model when planning the refurbishing of the Music Room. At that time, the Park had no appropriate telephone in its collection. The new telephone is now on display on Hayes's desk in the Music Room.



In May, Robert Geller of Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, donated an Edison R-2 radio. The Edison company marketed the R-2 during 1928 only. Consequently, today it is considered one of the rarest Edison radio models. Geller collected antique radios as a hobby during the 1960s. He purchased the Edison R-2 at a garage sale near Ridgewood, New Jersey for \$75.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Look how much the Glenmont oval has grown since volunteers planted it in May. We extend our thanks again to the Master Gardeners of Essex County and Rutgers University Extension for their work and the Board of the Friends of TENHP for their financial support.

