



The Lab Notebook

Jill Hawk Is New Superintendent of Thomas Edison National Historical Park

Jill A. Hawk, currently Superintendent of Morristown National Historical Park, has taken on the additional role of Superintendent of Thomas Edison National Historical Park. Jill succeeds Greg Marshall who retired in August.

Dennis R. Reidenbach, North East Regional Director of the National Park Service made the announcement on January 5, 2012. "Bringing the two parks together under a single superintendent," he said, "provides continuity of leadership plus opportunities for cooperation between two relatively close sites. Jill brings a great deal of skill, energy and enthusiasm into this dual position, and is the right person to lead these two important national parks."

"Having a single superintendent for multiple sites is common in the National Park Service," Jill said. "For me, it means the op-

portunity to engage with the staff, volunteer and partners at Thomas Edison without having to leave Morristown. It's the best of both worlds."

Prior to her assignment to Morristown in January 2011, Jill served as Northeast regional chief ranger in Philadelphia, overseeing a variety of programs that included risk management, environmental protection, safety and occupational health, law enforcement, wildland fire, structural fire, search and rescue, emergency management, emergency services, and aviation across the 13 northeast states. Before being selected as regional chief ranger in 2005, Jill was chief ranger at Mount Rainier National Park in Washington.

She began her NPS career in 1989 as a seasonal park ranger, first at Fire Island National Seashore and then at Shenandoah



National Park in Virginia. Early in her career, she also had assignments at the Statue of Liberty, Everglades National Park, and Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina.

Jill graduated from the FBI National Academy in March 2006. She completed graduate study in Organizational Psychology in 2005 from Antioch University, Seattle, and completed undergraduate study in natural resource management at the University of Tennessee-Martin in 1988.



The main laboratory building, 1887-1888.

Thomas Edison opened his newly built Laboratory in West Orange in 1887. Although the exact date is uncertain, it seems to have been sometime in the autumn. Consequently, 2012 marks the 125th anniversary of the six red-brick buildings that housed Edison's last and most lavish laboratory.

Happy 125th!

We will plan several commemorative events throughout the year, culminating in a symposium on November 17 that will open a week of programs through Thanksgiving weekend. During the year, follow us on Twitter for updates on upcoming events plus highlights drawn from the past century and a quarter of the Laboratory's history.

Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to Thomas Edison National Historical Park! This is my inaugural message as Park superintendent. If this is your first visit to the park, I share your excitement about what is to be discovered as you walk throughout the Laboratory Complex and the prized Edison estate at Glenmont. Please put all your preconceptions aside because as you visit this historic crown jewel of the National Park Service I expect that you will be amazed at what is here. You will learn, you will question, and you will discover that hard work and persistence were at the root of all Mr. Edison's methods and inventions. Nothing has really changed. The team at Thomas Edison National Historical Park are continually challenging themselves – whether it is to discover a long-forgotten sound recording, create a new educational program, or reveal the park's story to a new audience – to engage our 21st century guests in a world of invention and experience. I have found this to be an amazing place, one of history and intrigue; but also of creativity, challenge, and opportunity. As our guest, please enjoy “your national park” and share your experiences with me at:

EDIS_Superintendent@nps.gov.

Jill Hawk

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.

Thomas Edison National Historical Park

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Janet Armstrong with young visitors in Building 11.

Teacher-Ranger-Teacher

The Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program is a service-wide offering of the National Park Service that strengthens the bonds between schools and Parks. Individual Parks select a local teacher for a summer immersion experience

that allows the teacher to take part in the full ranger experience. Janet Armstrong, from the Parsippany-Troy Hills school district, spent her summer at Edison learning basic interpretive skills for staffing the front desk, operations at both the Laboratory and Glenmont, roving interpretation in Building 5, and program support for rangers giving Chemistry Lab tours. She conducted some Chemistry Lab tours herself and worked with several rangers on Camp Edison. With Ranger Tim Pagano, she designed activities for the Kindergarten to third grade campers to be used on the Inventors' Day of the camp. She created a picture scavenger hunt for the Heavy Machine Shop, and an I-Spy game for the Library. Both programs are now used in our current school programs.

In the fall, Janet received a grant to present a special engineering program, the “Skimmer Project,” that Rangers Ben Lee and Tim Pagano helped her present in her classroom. She is also conducting a course at Montclair State University's Gifted Enrichment Program called “Thinking Like Thomas Edison” for fourth and fifth grade gifted students.

Janet also developed a course as part of “Brain Unit” at the Gifted Reach Out program in Parsippany-Troy Hills for fifth grade students that helps them understand how Thomas Edison's brain enabled him to achieve so many things during his lifetime. She is also developing a letter-writing idea (“Dear Mr. Edison”). In April, Janet will address the Bergen Consortium of Gifted Teachers about her Edison experience.

The summer was a resounding success for Janet, the Park, and the Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program. We are looking forward to her return this summer.

Suzanne Vega Records Wax Cylinders for Audio Students



Suzanne Vega recording “Luka.”

On February 10, singer-songwriter Suzanne Vega visited Thomas Edison NHP to make wax cylinder recordings of her 1987 hit songs “Tom's Diner” and “Luka.” John Krivit, Chair of the Audio Engineering Society's Education Committee, arranged for about twenty students of Audio and Media Technology from Bay State College in Boston to witness the recording session and tour the Edison Laboratory.

A podcast of the event is available on-line at: <http://streetdate.radio.com/2012/02/14/suzanne-vega-steps-back-in-time-records-toms-diner-on-wax-cylinder-at-thomas-edisons-laboratory/>

Greg Milner of *Spin* magazine (seated in front left of photo) joins the class discussion about making and listening to sound recordings.



Preservation Notes

At Glenmont, AMEC contractors will be patching plaster and repainting the Servants' Dining Room and Hallway. They will also paint the Conservatory and make repairs to the glazing putty on its windows. All walls will return to their 1930 color. Work is scheduled to be completed by the end of March.

Painters apply a primer coat in the Conservatory.



Theodore Edison plastered the walls of his bedroom with automobile advertisements. After his teenage years, the room simply became a bedroom for his mother's overnight guests. Mina Edison repainted the room in a pale pink in 1940, but over the years this wall treatment fell into disrepair and was altered by both Thomas A. Edison, Inc.. and the National Park Service.



Theodore's bedroom today.

Christopher Mills Conservation Services returned the room to the historic color it had in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The team analyzed paint layers to determine that four campaigns of blue-green paint could be found on

the walls, one of them definitely in 1927, according to archival records. The team stabilized the plaster walls and recreated the blue-green color that can now be seen in decorative elements such as the fireplace tiles and the fabric above the mantel. The completion of this exciting project brings the site one step closer to restoring the second floor Glenmont guest bedrooms to their historic appearance.



Work begins on the retaining wall.

The brick retaining wall at the Laboratory Visitor Parking Lot is being resurfaced. Work should be completed by April 15. Visitors can still park in the lot near the Park entrance sign and in the handicapped parking spaces near the fence as well as in the employee parking area. Contractors will not work on the weekends, and caution tape and barricades will be in place along the brick wall side of the parking lot to alert visitors not to park there.

Voices from the Past

At the end of January the Park announced the release of 12 historic wax cylinder sound recordings made by Theo Wangemann, Thomas Edison's recording engineer in 1889-90. Wangemann travelled to Germany, Austria, Prussia, and France and captured the voices of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke, plus several performances by important musicians of the period.



Theo Wangemann, photographed in Berlin during his European trip, with an autographed message to Edison.

Museum staff cataloged the damaged wooden box containing the cylinders in 1957, but the recordings, some broken with pieces missing, were put aside while the rest of the sound recording collection received attention. In 2011, Jerry Fabris, the Park's Curator of Sound Recordings, digitized 12 of Wangemann's 17 cylinders using a French-made *Archéophone* cylinder playback machine.



Wangemann, about 1905.

Theo Wangemann oversaw the first regular production of pre-recorded cylinders at the Edison Laboratory in West Orange, in 1888-89, ushering in the beginning of the American musical recording industry. Later, Wangemann's trip abroad played a prominent role in introducing Edison's invention to continental Europe.

To hear the recordings themselves, visit our website. The link is: <http://www.nps.gov/edis/photosmultimedia/theo-wangemann-1889-1890-european-recordings.htm>. There you will also find two more informative articles, a biography of Wangemann by Patrick Feaster, a Grammy nominee who specializes in the history of sound media, and an article on

Wangemann's European recordings by Stephan Pülle of the University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, Germany.



Patrick Feaster, sound recording historian, presented a talk here on Wangemann's European trip. Inset: one of the wax recordings.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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How did we overlook this photo for the last issue?

Health-conscious Edison staffers and volunteers took part in the 2011 Llewellyn Park 5K Run/Walk last October 2. They took a breather for this group portrait.



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Volunteers-In-Parks Coordinator Thomas Edison National Historical Park

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The Model T Gets a Tune-Up



Model T experts Bob Jablonski and George Mills volunteered several hours doing maintenance work on Edison's 1922 Ford at the Glenmont garage. At right, a view of the Model T in the 2011 West Orange St. Patrick's Day Parade.

