

THE MAGIC AGE OF STEAM

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- * Operating Steam Museum
- * Auburn Valley Miniature Steam Railroad
- * Old-Time Amusements
- * Largest Collection of Stanley Steam Cars in the World

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To All Employees of the MAGIC AGE OF STEAM:

Many of you have worked here prior to 1974, and you have done a great job! I have always known I could count on you when "the chips were down"- that is, when we have been busy and even "rushed" like at Christmas time, you have come through in grand style. I thank you very much for the fine work.

This memo is put out for new employees, as well as those of you who have been here.

One of the problems of any proprietor or manager is to make his venture profitable. We would not run the MAGIC AGE OF STEAM if we didn't think we would make money some day, even though we haven't had large enough crowds so far. We must keep trying. Another problem is to "motivate" his employees; that is, to be able to get them to take a real interest in what they are doing, and not just working for the weekly paycheck. That paycheck is motivation in itself, I well realize, and I don't blame any of you for working toward it. All of us do this, very definitely- I wouldn't be working either if there were not some financial reward. But if we can enjoy the work as we're doing it, this becomes obvious to our visitors, and gives them a good impression of the place, and makes them want to come back again.

In order to get the most publicity and advertising from the least amount spent, it is essential that we have good "word-of-mouth" relations going for us from all those who have visited. I'm sure, despite all the money we spend on brochures, newspaper advertising, radio, etc., that more people come to visit as a result of someone telling them about the place than for any other one reason. With this in mind, I feel we have to "dress up" our operation even more, and make people, when they leave, so enthusiastic, that they will tell many more friends, and even want to come back very soon themselves. This coming year, though maybe we can't start everything at the beginning of the season, we hope to instigate the following changes, with the hope that they will generate more business for us, and at the same time, make your job (especially the conductor) more fun.

- 1) Change in the Train Ride. While the price of the Combination Ticket we offered last season remains the same, the train ride, by itself, goes up to 75¢ for adults and 40¢ for children under 13. But it is twice as long a ride, and instead of merely going around the loop with one stop to take tickets, there will be several. With the help of you conductors, I hope to make this ride one the people will really talk about!

Shortly after our season begins, we hope to have our new "high line" in operation, and passengers can board or detrain at West Yorklyn and at the front gateway, from either the "high line" or the "low grade". A train going out of West Yorklyn toward the tunnel will first stop at Steam Hill Station, where passengers coming in from the parking lot may board, and those leaving the grounds, or wanting the boat ride may get off. It will then proceed on around, and stop at Auburn Mills while the engineer throws the Switch ahead. Then it will proceed up the high line to West Yorklyn, stopping again. Again, passengers may get off or get on. It will then climb Summit Grade, and come around to the driveway crossing above the pond. This will be another stop for getting off or on. Finally, it will descend back down to the turntable, stop briefly at Auburn Mills for the engineer to again throw the switch ahead of him, proceed out across the trestle to the starting point. This full circuit will normally be considered "one ride".

Now, how do we punch tickets on such a complicated system? There will be signs, both out front and at West Yorklyn Station, explaining that when a passenger gets on the train, he will immediately have his ticket punched before the train departs. The ride is not over until the passenger gets off, but once he gets off, he must pay another fare before he can ride again. Some may only want to ride $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total, or $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ of the total- that is O.K. as long as they don't get off. However, conductors will have the right to ask anyone to get off after one full ride (two times around), if the passengers in question are getting rambunctious, or if there are passengers waiting who have not been able to get on.

For this to work, we must have vocal conductors. You will have to announce all stations, so people will know why we are stopping. This is all part of real railroading of years ago, which we are trying to duplicate. If you cannot be heard, we may have to obtain a walkie-talkie or some kind of bull horn, so the passengers can hear you. Since we don't know yet just how this will work out, we may have to change the system as we go along. We may even operate on a real schedule, with engineer and conductor being responsible for train departures from each station according to a published schedule. All this adds to the fun, not only for our visitors, but for ourselves!

- 2) Balloons and Popcorn. We know how popular free popcorn is at Christmas time, and it seems to be a good gimmick. We also have lots of balloons on hand which nobody really wants to bother with. So, on special days if not every day, we want to have "Roxy" making popcorn and having balloons available again. This time, we may not even sell them. We may tell people at the front gate that if they present a combination ticket to Roxy, he will give them a free bag of popcorn. Or a free balloon for all those under 5 years old. If the free popcorn helps the sale of drinks at the snack bar, we may continue it on more days. If it hurts

the sale of other food, we may do it less often. But we want to try it again, for all it's worth.

- 3) Our dress and appearance. At various times, we have had name badges, until they get lost or we just forget to put them on. We must try to do this again, because it is often the only way people know who is working here. I plan to get 3 conductor's caps in different sizes, and will keep them here for the train conductors to wear, and I want every conductor to wear it. We will also have a couple of derby hats for boys to wear, and maybe a stiff straw hat for Roxy. Also, I want Roxy to have a red and white striped shirt, and we will try to furnish this. It should be worn with a bow tie, and the clip-on type is O.K. I would hope we can get a certain type jacket with the same color scheme for boys and girls. We are going to work on this. While conductors always look better with a white shirt and black tie, I'm not going to insist on this, but I do want you to look neat. Please always wear long trousers. The engineers are the one exception- we know it is hard to keep clean, and we do not expect you to wear good clothes, but it is not necessary to be all greasy, either. An engineer's cap always looks good. And everybody, please wear shoes! Girls can wear pants, shorts or mini-skirts as long as they are clean, and look nice. Again, please wear shoes, not sandals. And try to keep your hair looking neat, girls and boys!
- 4) Types of Tickets. In addition to the individual tickets and combination tickets we have had, we will have an "outdoor combination" for people who have been here before (mostly children) and who do not wish to repeat the Museum. This will be any 5 rides for \$1.50 (adults) and \$1.00 (children under 13). This is a real buy for children, saving them 40¢ over individual tickets, but only one railroad ride may be taken on this ticket (twice around the circuit or until they get off). We anticipate very few grounds admission tickets to be sold any more, as a railroad ticket (they can now "ride in") eliminates the need for a person to buy a grounds admission. In other words, if someone buys a railroad ticket, or either of the two types of combination ticket at the front gate, he will not need a grounds admission ticket. We will probably change the old, white "special features" tickets somewhat, using a "general ride" ticket (good on all rides except railroad) instead.
- 5) Gift Shop. We are adding some more items for sale, and we hope whoever is in charge of the gift shop and museum, will keep it looking nice and attractive, and will try to sell more items than in the past. Gift shop sales can be very profitable to us, and a lot of our visitors like a nice shop. We realize, we have a long way to go, but we will try to keep improving it.
- 6) The Most Important Thing- Wages. Most of you have been earning the minimum wage (\$1.60 per hour) plus 5.85% as I have been paying your social security tax. This has therefore been equivalent to \$1.70. I will continue to pay this, as a minimum, unless the minimum wage law is changed and applies to those under 18 with a greatly increased rate, in which case I will have to deduct Social Security. No one under 16 will be eligible for pay in excess of the minimum wage.

However, as soon as an employee is over 16 and has been with us at least three months, he or she will be eligible for a higher rate of pay, based on the job he or she is doing. This will be our own "merit system". Factors to be considered are age, the type of job he or she can do, and most important, how well that job is done. Appearance and attitude will have great bearing on this.

So, let's give all these changes a good chance, and see if we cannot be handling TWICE as many people before long!

Thomas C. Marshall, Jr.