

The Roebling Wire

No. 35

News From  ROEBLING MUSEUM

Fall 2021

Share Your History of Work in Roebling

The big news in our last newsletter was the announcement of our partnership with the Smithsonian on an exhibit about work in Roebling. We are building an exhibit that places workers at the center and we want to hear what it was like to work in Roebling directly from the people who lived it—and that includes stories that have been passed down through families.

We are thinking broadly about the definition of work and would like to hear about working at the mill but also stories about family members who ran an ethnic butcher shop, shined shoes, delivered milk, taught children, took in laundry for neighbors, operated a casino, served as a nurse, etc.

Would you like to tell us about your experience or your family's experience working in Roebling? Do you remember what it sounded like to live near a steel mill? How did it smell? Did you feel poor or rich?

No story is too small—it's all important! Please reach out to Lynne.Calamia@roebblingmuseum.org or call us at (609) 499-7200.



Executive Director Honored with Young Preservationist Award by Preservation NJ

Dr. Lynne Calamia, executive director of Roebling Museum, received a Young Preservationist Award from Preservation New Jersey in honor of her work to preserve and present New Jersey history. It is the first such award given by Preservation New Jersey, a statewide member-supported nonprofit historic preservation organization.

Dr. Calamia is a public history professional with over a decade of professional experience. She has led museums, preserved historic sites, conserved cultural landscapes, protected industrial history, and raised money as a tireless advocate for historic preservation every step of the way. The Young Preservationist Award honors her "contribution to the preservation of our state's historic resources and the understanding of our state history," said Emily Manz, Preservation New Jersey's executive director.

As Executive Director of Roebling Museum, Dr. Calamia manages a museum that tells the story of a 1905 company town, where a majority immigrant/migrant workforce

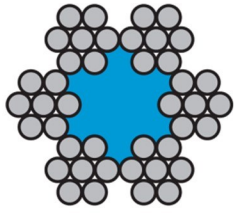
fabricated cables for the nation's biggest suspension bridges including the George Washington Bridge and Golden Gate Bridge.

"In just a short time as executive director, Lynne has led Roebling Museum in the purchase of a historic workers' rowhome in the former company town, landed the Museum a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, and reinvigorated the Museum's community programming," said Roebling Museum President Martha Moore. "It's an impressive record considering Lynne was on the job in Roebling for just two months before COVID-19 forced New Jersey's cultural institutions to close to the public. She's done fantastic work in the face of significant pandemic challenges."

The award was presented in a ceremony on October 13th at the 1867 Sanctuary in Ewing.

Dr. Calamia is also part of a significant effort to preserve the oldest extant religious building in Camden, a Quaker meeting house. Prior to joining Roebling Museum, Dr. Calamia was executive director of Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, a Quaker meeting house in continuous use since 1682. She earned her PhD. in public history from Penn State University. Earlier in her career, she worked at the New Jersey State Museum and the Hershey Archive in Hershey, Pa.





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A Letter from the President

When you're ordering a pumpkin spice latte—or hating on people who do—it means that autumn has arrived. Fall is the time of year when the Roebing Museum asks members and friends to contribute to our Annual Appeal. If you get this newsletter in the mail, you've also received a letter from Executive Director Lynne Calamia asking you for a gift in support of our fall campaign. I'm asking too! The \$7 admission fee we charge visitors (\$6 for seniors and kids) doesn't go very far! Not when there are so many exciting things happening at the Roebing Museum. Led by Lynne, a group of local volunteers is working on a new exhibit in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's "Museum on Main Street" program. Our knowledgeable docents are leading walking tours of the unique company town every weekend. And we offer virtual and in person special events throughout the year!

The Museum is a nonprofit organization. We are proud to have earned financial support from the New Jersey Historical Commission and New Jersey Historic Trust, among other funders. Their support is a sign that state grant makers believe the mission of the Roebing Museum is valuable and that our staff and board of directors are doing a good job in preserving and interpreting this important history. But we could not survive without the generosity of friends and members to help underwrite our professional staff, new exhibits or community events like the car show, ghost tours, and Roebing Roadtrip lectures. The fall Annual Appeal fundraising effort provides fully one-third of our budget. This year's appeal is especially important as the Museum, like other cultural organizations, continues to recover from the constraints forced on us by the pandemic. Please be generous and help us continue to tell the truly remarkable Roebing story. And thank you so much. We are grateful and honored by your support.

See you Saturdays at the Museum!

Martha Moore
President, Board of Directors

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Roebing Museum is to document, preserve, and exhibit the history of the John A. Roebing's Sons Company, the Roebing family and the village of Roebing. The focus of the museum is both the industrial and technological achievements of the company and the unique social history of its workforce and the town it created. The museum connects a storied past to the present while also serving as a valuable resource for school curriculum enhancement and academic research. It is the only museum in the world dedicated solely to the accomplishments of the Roebing family, its businesses and workers and the engineering innovations of the company in Trenton and Roebing, New Jersey.



Membership at Roebing Museum has its privileges! Become a member and enjoy free general admission for a year while supporting all that we do, from education programs for local schoolchildren to conservation of nationally important art and artifacts.

Join or renew your membership at roebingmuseum.org today, and help keep history alive and enlightening in this unique village!

Board Member Spotlight—Dana Koeppel

Dana Koeppel was fascinated by Roebing long before she moved to the former company town. Growing up in Hopewell, N.J. she and her best friend Nicole were “bridge nerds,” she says. The two would often take friends on a “Roebing roadtrip” around Trenton to see the statue of John A. Roebing in Cadwalader Park and the little Roebing-built suspension bridge called the Shaky Bridge. Neither of the friends remember how it all started. “It was just a funny thing between the two of us that we had an unnecessary amount of knowledge about John A. Roebing.”

Today Dana lives in a row house on Seventh Avenue—but her move there three years ago wasn’t related to her love of Roebing bridges. As is so often true in New Jersey, it was about finding a home that she both loved and could afford.

“It sounds so cheesy, but I have never been so happy since I moved here. My life just did a 360,” Dana says. She has been joined in her historic home by her fiancé Jason and their dog, Anakin. “I’m just very, very happy here,” Dana says. “I think Roebing found me.”

Dana’s work at the Museum has been part of her Roebing story since the beginning. Her first weekend in town, in 2018, coincided with a big event: filmmaker Ken Burns came to Roebing Museum to show his newly-restored documentary on the Brooklyn Bridge to a crowd of 300 people on the Museum lawn. “I spent my first full day of being a Roebing resident at the Roebing Museum,” Dana says. That morning, someone had “paid it forward” by buying her coffee at Dunkin Donuts, so she decided to continue the good will: “There was a little elderly woman in line behind me at the Museum buying some Christmas ornaments. I said to the person at the desk, ‘I want to be a volunteer and I want to pay for everything that this woman has.’ So that’s how it all started at the Museum.”

Dana, who works as a sales representative for artists’ supplies and is a dedicated yoga practitioner, runs the Museum’s social media posts, which often feature her own skilled photography. She organizes the Millyard yoga classes and is very involved with the Museum’s community activities like the Halloween house-decorating contest and neighborhood clean-ups.

Last year, she joined the Board of Directors, bringing her creativity and enthusiasm to the board’s job of keeping the Museum financially sound and strategically focused.

“It’s an amazing, positive learning experience for me,” she says. “I really want to take whatever I’m passionate about and use it in the most helpful, effective, productive way.” Her goals as a board member are to bring to the Museum more information about the Roebing company’s history in Trenton, and to make accessible to visitors the two remaining mill buildings along the Delaware River Heritage Trail, which house machinery invented for the building of the George Washington Bridge. In the short term, Dana is involved with the Museum’s upcoming exhibit in partnership with the Smithsonian, and planning for the future of 101 Second Avenue, the row house owned by the Museum.

“This feels like the most exciting time for someone to join or volunteer because we have so much going on and so much of a story to tell,” she says. “I love putting together community events and if somebody just wants to do that, they could do that. If they want to learn about historic preservation, they can do that. There’s really something for everyone.”



Recent Events at Roebing Museum



Second Annual Roebing Museum Garden Tour, June 2021



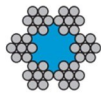
First Roebing Museum bike tour, September 2021



Eleventh Annual Roebing Museum Car Show, September, 2021



Scarecrow contest, October 2021



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John A. Roebing and the rest of us at Roebing Museum want your help!

Seeking Board Members

Are you a marketing genius? Do you love strategic planning or fixing old buildings? Would your unique skills benefit a small museum? We want to hear from you!

As a board member, you'd have the exciting opportunity to be part of a committed, enthusiastic team working to provide thoughtful leadership to our growing museum.

Who are we looking for? Our goal is to gather a group energized volunteers who are passionate about our mission and represent diverse professions, cultures, religions, ages, and skills. We have many board members from our local community, but we are not limited geographically.

People with fundraising experience, accounting skills, a background in education or HR, and museum/non-profit experience are recommended to apply.

Send us a note using the board service form on our website or call (609) 499-7200.



HOURS & ADMISSION

Due to COVID-19 our hours will vary. Check out our website or follow us on Facebook for the most up to date information about hours and upcoming events.

March through December:

Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

January and February:

Open by appointment for groups and researchers

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year's Day & Easter

\$7.00—Adults; **\$6.00**—Seniors and Children 6-12
Free for Members and Children under 6

Roebing Museum is supported by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the federal CARES Act.

Roebing Museum received an operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.



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www.roebingmuseum.org