

THE TATTOO

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Essex steam train rolls through time

By ZACH BROKENROPE
The Tattoo

As the Essex Steam Train pulls away from its home depot in Essex, Connecticut a mix of burning coal and the scent of summer fills the air.

The combination might be an unpleasant smell to some, but for others it adds to the charm. The steam train and accompanying riverboat ride provide a delightful and relaxing afternoon for people of all ages.

After closing in 1968, the steam train reopened three years later as a tourist attraction, exactly 100 years to the day that it carried its first passengers across New England.

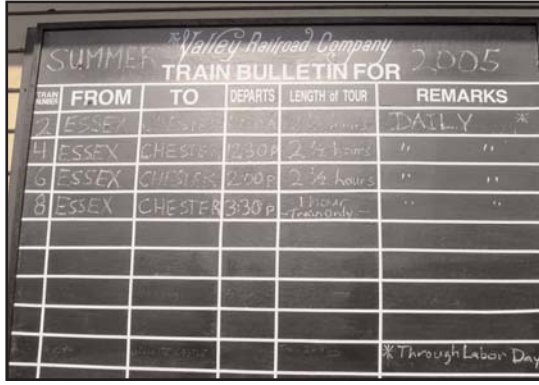
The railway was built in the early 1900s, during the peak of the engineering age. The cars were built between 1914 and 1925.

Upon arrival, passengers purchase tickets for the steam train, riverboat, or a combination package of the two. They can check the blackboard at the historic Essex Station, where departure times are still written in chalk.

As riders board the train, conductors dressed in traditional clothing greet them with a friendly smile and a kind voice, adding to the feel of the time period they strive to represent.

The regular cars (a seat in the parlor car is available for an additional fee) provide comfortable seating and low lighting as the natural sunlight seeps through the spacious windows. These same windows also provide a cool and soothing breeze in the hot summer afternoons.

As the train rolls through the beautiful



Zach Brokenrope / The Tattoo

The Essex Steam Train, left. Above, the train's schedule for the day is written in chalk at the historic Essex Station.

Connecticut scenery, a tour guide speaks clearly and precisely over the intercom, detailing the interesting history of the steam train.

Upon arrival at the dock in nearby Chester, riders get off the train and climb aboard the *Becky Thatcher*, a riverboat named after Tom Sawyer's girlfriend and set off on a 90-minute journey down the Connecticut River.

All three of the ship's decks offer beautiful views - and as they enjoy the scenery, passengers can listen to a crew member detail the history of the surrounding landmarks.

When the riverboat returns to the dock, pas-



sengers once again board the steam train for the ride back to the depot in Essex. The entire trip takes about two and a half

hours. It's a knowledgeable and fun trip for the entire family - one that even teenagers will enjoy.



Justin Skaradosky / The Tattoo

Tattoo staffers scoop up awards

Two writers for *The Tattoo* recently captured nationwide Gold Key journalism awards in the annual contest by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Quill and Scroll Society.

Katie Jordan, a 2005 Bristol Eastern High School graduate, captured top honors in the editorial cartoon category while Ashley Michaud, a 2005 Terryville High School graduate, garnered a prize for her news story about a student-directed play.

Tattoo writers also snagged four first place awards in the year-long contest sponsored by the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists, besting professional reporters in the process.

Jordan and Joe Keo, who also graduated from Eastern in June, each won three first place awards in the annual competition. For the third year in a row, Keo took top honors in the editorial cartoons category, this time for a cartoon about tortue in Iraq.

Jordan won first place in the sports column category for "A whole new outlook on sports and America," which she wrote after interviewing Afghan girls visiting the U.S. to play soccer.

In the arts and entertainment category, Keo and Jordan shared a first place award for articles they wrote about visiting the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford.

Thirteen teenage writers from *The Tattoo* snagged first place in the SPJ feature series category for the *2004 Insider's Guide to High School*. The writers who shared that award were Keo, Jordan, Eastern junior Kate Haire, Terryville High School junior Stefan Koski, Bristol Central High School sophomores Jen Plonski and Christine French, Eastern graduate Sarah Jordan and long distance *Tattoo* writers Kaishi Lee of Singapore, Minnesotan Minha Lee, Canadian Teague Neal, Nebraskan Zach Brokenrope, Floridian Jessica Burkhart and New Yorker Monica Gleberman.

No soldier deserves to die

By NIAMH NI MHAOILEOIN
The Tattoo

It was seven o'clock on an uncharacteristically grey and cool morning in Normandy and the biting wind was causing an empty flagpole to rattle eerily in the World War II German cemetery at La Cambe.

The cemetery was simple and elegant with rows of flat, black headstones and small clusters of black crosses. These surrounded the central monument, a cross flanked by a man and woman at the top of a small hill, surrounded by blood red roses.

Standing looking out from this hill at thousands of graves I was struck by the senseless tragedy of the war.

When I stood and looked at the grave of one soldier, only a year older than me when he was killed, I was hit by the exact same feeling.

I realized that the true tragedy of war does not lie in lists and statistics stating the number of deaths, but in the millions of individual stories of death, pain and grief.

Having seen the German cemetery we continued on to the American memorial.

The day had grown brighter by the time we reached the memorial, which overlooks Omaha Beach where the Allies landed on D-Day.

This cemetery was much bigger and more lavishly decorated. The main feature was, of course, the thousands of simple white crosses stretching out in front of us with a circular chapel at the center.

Facing the graves there is a large semi-circular colonnade with a bronze statue named "Spirit of American Youth" as the focal point. This cemetery is carefully maintained by the United States government and great focus is placed on celebrating the heroics of those who died fighting.

After seeing both I found myself drawing comparisons between the two.

I wondered if it was coincidence that the Germans were commemorated with black crosses while the Americans were buried under white ones. The German monument showed two older people, perhaps a mother and father, looking bowed and defeated while the "Spirit of American Youth" was a fantastic bronze statue showing a young man full of life and energy.

Similarly the Americans were all

described as heroes who believed in and proudly died for their cause while it was suggested that the Germans did not believe in their cause but had no choice other than fighting, the ultimate examples of wrong place, wrong time.

These factors led me to think that perhaps history is written by the victors. However, having seen approximately 30,000 graves, commemorating 30,000 young, ambitious and unique young men, I realized that war is not about winners or losers.

None of those killed deserved to die - they were all victims - and their memories will live on to remind us of that.

Niamh Ni Mhaoileoin / The Tattoo

Top - The central monument in the German war cemetery in Normandy, France.

Right - A German soldier's grave at the WWII cemetery in Normandy, France, for German war dead.

Below - Graves of American soldiers at the WWII cemetery in Normandy, France.



Taking the college search to California

By STEFAN KOSKI
The Tattoo

One of the most prescribed pieces of advice when trying to choose a college is to visit the college itself in order to get an idea what the campus, dorms, and programs are like.

This is fine for local colleges or even colleges within the state. But it becomes much more of a problem when visiting colleges across the country - in my case, from Connecticut to California.

The allure of California colleges is much more than the warm weather.

Schools such as the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California have some of the best film programs in the country. With a huge interest in being a film major, it was

imperative that I saw both. About a month in advance, planning for the trip began.



Stefan Koski / The Tattoo

The University of California, Los Angeles

Tour reservations had to be made for the schools I was going to visit: USC, UCLA, and

the California Institute of the Arts (another major film school in California).

Expenses limited the trip to a four-day affair with travel time, so a one-school-per-day schedule was adopted.

Time constraints also limited how far apart the colleges I was going to visit could be. Thankfully, USC, UCLA, and CalArts are each about half an hour driving distance from each other as long as the traffic isn't horrendous.

Anticipating bad traffic conditions, reservations at three different hotels - the closest ones to each campus - were made to minimize the traveling distance on the way there for tours. Plane tickets also had to be purchased and boarding passes printed out.

Campus tours, as generic as that might sound, are not

generic in their make-up.

Some tours are intensive, involving a visit to the major college buildings, dorms, and cafeterias as well as sit-downs with department heads.

They can range from a basic questions and answers session (such as at CalArts) or as intense as the full campus tour with in-depth explanations of the program (such as at USC). Important pieces of information that required close attention include admission requirements, costs, financial assistance, and, additionally important for far-away schools, the percentage of the student body that's out-of-state.

Schools like UCLA may have 2 or 3 percent of their student body from out-of-state, whereas USC has an impressive 40 percent. This can be crucial when determining whether the

prospective student might feel like an outsider.

Another point of interest for a student coming from another state is the availability of on-campus housing, which can be a necessity for those who are going home on a weekly or even monthly basis simply isn't possible financially.

In this case, all three schools provide housing for freshmen and sophomores, and UCLA provides housing for all its undergraduates.

While deciding on which colleges to attend out-of-state, a visit to the college itself is crucial. Living and attending school far away means picking a college that is both comfortable to live in and ideal for a student's academic pursuits.

Making a bad choice can equate to being a long way off without any help or support.

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The best teen journalism in the world. For questions, comments or to join, contact advisors Steve Collins and Jackie Majerus at (860)523-9632.