MEDIA ADVISORY

Carnegie Science Center Offers Preview of Miniature Railroad & Village®, New Omnimax Film, Rocky Mountain Express, and Holiday Magic Laser Show

WHAT: Special advance preview of several highlights of the 2011 holiday season for members of Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh:

- Reopening of the Miniature Railroad & Village®, with its new feature – a miniature replica of Washington County’s historic Manchester-Farms, including elegant farmhouse, some outbuildings, and landscaping

- New Omnimax film, Rocky Mountain Express, which propels audiences on a steam train journey through the breathtaking vistas of the Canadian Rockies and relates the epic adventure of building Canada’s first transcontinental railway

- New laser show, Holiday Magic—new graphics and new music, including some old favorites

WHEN: Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2011
4–9 pm
Movie and laser show times: 5:30, 6:45, and 8 pm

WHERE: Carnegie Science Center, One Allegheny Avenue, Pittsburgh’s North Shore

MEDIA/VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES:

- Miniature Railroad & Village® exhibit, refreshed and refurbished and updated with its new feature, the exquisitely detailed Isaac Manchester House
- Preview of Rocky Mountain Express, a new Omnimax movie that will open to the public on the BIGGEST screen in Pittsburgh on Friday, Nov. 25
- Preview of Holiday Magic, an all-new laser show that opens to the public on Monday, Nov. 21.
- Crowds amid the holiday décor of Carnegie Science Center

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Margie Manchester, current owner of Manchester-Farms (also called Plantation Plenty) and fifth great-granddaughter of Isaac Manchester, who established the farm in Avella, Pa., in the 18th century
- Patty Rogers, Curator of Historic Exhibits, Carnegie Science Center

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FACTS AND STATS:

About the Miniature Railroad & Village:

- The legacy of the Miniature Railroad & Village® began nearly 90 years ago. Charles Bowdish of Brookville, Pa., built a miniature railroad village that debuted on Christmas Eve in 1920. In the following years, his display grew until it occupied most of the second floor of the Bowdish home. No admission fee was ever charged to the thousands who visited each Christmas season.

- The Buhl Planetarium adopted Bowdish’s masterpiece and re-named it the Christmastown Railroad, first on display December 1954—when nearly 24,000 visited. After a redesign and reconstruction, a greatly enhanced and enlarged Miniature Railroad & Village® debuted at Carnegie Science Center in 1992.

- The current display illustrates how people lived, worked, and played in the region during an era spanning the 1880s into the late 1930s, and it continues to grow and pay homage to the diverse history of western Pennsylvania during that time.

- Currently, the display features more than 250,000 hand-made trees, 98 animations, and dozens of models including Fallingwater, Forbes Field, Luna Park, Altoona’s Leap-the-Dips roller coaster, and the Sharon Steel Mill.

About Manchester-Farms:

- Isaac Manchester purchased a 400-acre plot of land in 1797 near what is now Avella, in Washington County, Pa. For eight generations, Manchester-Farms, also called Plantation Plenty, has remained in the same family. In 2005, the current owner, Margie Manchester, purchased her fifth great-grandfather’s farm from another family member.

- The elegant Georgian Isaac Manchester House has been replicated in exquisite detail by Patty Rogers, Carnegie Science Center’s curator of Historic Exhibits.

- Isaac, with the help of his 12 children, built all of the farm’s outbuildings with materials found on or near his land. The bricks were made of clay that was baked on the farm, and the timber was cut and cured by hand.

- Manchester-Farms is an ever-evolving time capsule filled with two centuries worth of letters, tools, clothes, and furniture that tell the story of Pennsylvania’s farming history.

- Most of the farm's original elements can still be found on the property today, which the Manchester family has worked tirelessly to preserve. There are eight outbuildings on the farm including the sheep barn, still house, spring house, carriage house, tool house, and wood shed. Some of these are already replicated in the Miniature Railroad, others will evolve over time as more details are completed.

- In 2011, this historic farm was put on the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s list of the “11 Most Endangered Historic Places in America” because of the threat of coal mining in the area. Manchester and along with a dedicated team of supporters, are diligently working to prevent longwall mining under the farm’s acreage.

- Manchester-Farms is a U.S.D.A.-certified organic dairy and livestock farm. Local grocers like Whole Foods and Giant Eagle Market District carry their organic dairy products; organic beef and pork are available through the farm’s website. Just as Isaac Manchester did more than 200 years ago, this historic homestead is farming organically, without the use of pesticides, using eco-friendly practices, and raising grass-fed free range livestock.

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About Rocky Mountain Express

- The film weaves together spectacular IMAX aerial cinematography, breathtaking western vistas, archival photographs and maps, and the potent energy and rhythms of a live steam locomotive to immerse audiences in an era of ingenuity and struggle and a region of stunning natural beauty.

- As the film begins, we are introduced to William Cornelius Van Horne, a young American railway superintendent who takes on one of the most ambitious and daunting projects ever: the building of the longest railway in the world, across a largely unmapped and impenetrable mountain barrier, the Canadian Rockies.

- The steam locomotive CPR 2816 comes alive on the giant screen in all its steam-powered glory. In a cloud of vapor, the engine and her classic set of passenger cars roar into a Pacific morning—bound for the Rockies and points east.

- In November 1885, crews working from east and west met finally at Craigellachie, deep in the heart of the mountains to hammer in the Last Spike. Canada was at last one country, physically connected from sea to sea.

- Operating the ambitious railway was also a near impossibility. In addition to the terribly steep grades, the young railway also faced bridge-consuming fires, track-burying rock and mudslides, relentless snowstorms, lethal avalanches and continuing financial jeopardy.

- When the surveyors first laid eyes on what would soon become Banff National Park, they called it the most beautiful place on earth. And before long, tourists from across the globe were traveling the Canadian Pacific Railway system to experience this wilderness beauty.

- Filmmaker Stephen Low’s enthusiasm for trains was kindled as a child on visits with his father to the rail yards in Montreal in the mid-1950s when the last of the great steam locomotives were still in service. Later, out of University in the early 1970s, Low worked as a brakeman on freight trains on the Canadian Pacific Railway before ultimately turning his attention to the craft of filmmaking and a 30-year career shaping extraordinary experiences for the giant IMAX® screen. His films include The Ultimate Wave Tahiti, Super Speedway, Titanica, and Volcanoes of the Deep Sea.

About Carnegie Science Center

Carnegie Science Center brings the world of science alive for visitors of all ages. One of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, the Science Center features hands-on exhibits, three live demonstration theaters, a four-story Omnimax theater, Highmark SportsWorks®, an interactive full-dome digital planetarium, a Cold War-era submarine moored on Pittsburgh’s Ohio River, the world’s largest and most comprehensive robotics exhibition, and a world-renowned model railroad display. Carnegie Science Center is located at One Allegheny Avenue on Pittsburgh’s North Shore next to Heinz Field. Visit CarnegieScienceCenter.org, or call 412.237.3400 for more information.

About Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh

Founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1895, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh is a collection of four distinctive museums dedicated to exploration through art and science: Carnegie Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Carnegie Science Center, and The Andy Warhol Museum. Annually, the museums reach more than 1.2 million people through exhibitions, educational programs, outreach activities, and special events.

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