

Steam Train Recreated for 4th of July 50 Years Later

Bicentennial to Semiquincentennial – A Tribute to a Stepfather, a Hometown and a Nation

RIVERSIDE, IL, UNITED STATES, July 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In 1976, John Senser and the author wanted to make a steam train from a riding mower for the 4th of July Parade in Riverside, IL. Julian Kostka, stepfather, worked to make the idea a reality. The craft was dubbed "Spirit of '76".

A few years ago, a photo was discovered online of that very train with the author, at twelve years old, as "conductor". Recreating that steam train might be the best possible tribute to "Jules", the unsung stepfather who was a stabilizing force following the author's father's death. A few years after the USA's Bicentennial, Jules would coach Riverside's all-star baseball team to a run unparalleled in its history.



Spirit of 76 in Riverside's 4th of July Parade, 1976

The steam train will appear in Riverside's 4th of July Parade starting at Big Ball Park at 8:45 AM on Saturday and ending in downtown Riverside.

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