

March 7, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

History lesson, Clarence Marshall's first cars, 1904-1908: My father's first car was an Orient Buckboard, although it requires a stretch of the imagination to call it a car. It had no usual leaf springs, but relied on the flex of the floorboards to soften the ride. The Waltham Company, its manufacturer, introduced the Buckboard in 1902, and my father bought a used one, but he didn't like it. Steam was much better, so this little 2-passenger was converted to steam (as was Bill Rule's Packard 37 years later). The success of this venture was never discussed, but the chassis of this little "car" without any semblance of steering or power plant, was here until I scrapped it about 20 years ago. His second car was a 2-cylinder Elmore, his third a 2-cylinder Winton, and his fourth a 4-cylinder Winton of 1906, all used or "second-hand" cars. Photos exist of my father with some of his girl friends at Brandywine Battlefield Park (Chadds Ford) in this 1906 Winton, and the family, including my grandparents, made a 3-day round-trip to Gettysburg in it in 1907. My father always said this was a fine car, but from then on, it was all steam for the next 10 years (to be continued).

Butch has ordered me a new printer which should arrive this week. It is our hope that we can print our flyers, tickets, etc. right here, as we already have a nice paper cutter donated by Butch and Bill Schwoebel. The left front fender from the Model 87 has been straightened and repainted and is partially installed. Jim Personti has rebuilt the leaf springs from the main drive axles of Locomotive #402, and last Thursday he was well-satisfied with 5 out of the 8. He took 3 of them home to work some more on the tension. McMaster-Carr has a coil spring that may be right for the captain's-chair passenger cars. Jim also suggested how to repair the feed water heater on the Model 76. Emil and Butch worked again on re-soldering the seams of the water tank from the CX, and they are getting close to completion. Chuck continues to organize the shop, and his dedicated work is starting to show.

Anne Cleary held a Special Events Committee meeting at her house last Thursday, attended by 7 active volunteers. It was decided that the house at Auburn Heights would be open for tours on our "Steamin' Sundays" in May and October. Anne's committee is still working on different themes for our monthly openings. Butch has published a schedule of events for the coming season, as we know them at this time. I've been cleaning out boxes of paper and photos in the cellar, and I have more material for Butch and the Maute boys to add to our library in the Museum. The Wilmington Rotary Club plans a special event here on Saturday, June 25. We'll soon finalize plans for another special event in late May, but our first public opening, a "charter", is still for the Wilmington Friends School group on May

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Bill Schwoebel continues to do a lot of work on organizing the Management Group and in getting responsible people to head committees. Please understand that we volunteers must assume management and planning responsibilities, as we have no paid staff. Progress is being made on establishing the budgeting process. And we are anxious to get instruction and training for operating Stanley cars going as soon as possible; Bill has at least 10 FAHP members, some "old" and some "new", interested in taking this course. You have heard from him on this subject, and there will be more very soon.

Steve Jensen, chairman of the railroad group, announces that the weekend of April 2-3 will be the beginning of annual track work on the Auburn Valley. He would like about 8 volunteers on these work days. Detailed times will be forthcoming. And now, after a spring-like day, we return to late winter. Good night. Tom