

F.A.H.P. News, March 4, 2013

Our American Language: Hi, everyone! Where did “Hi” come from? Here’s my guess: Many years ago, people were concerned about a friend’s health, so they would say “How are you feeling?” Reduced to “How are ya,” the inquirer is seldom interested in his friend’s health, and in a hurry, he might say “Hi-ya,” which became “Hi.” This evolved gradually during the 20th century. In the 19th century, “How do you do” was a proper greeting. In the 20th, my father and many others shortened this to “How-de-do,” and many simply said “How do.” Some, like Bob Wilhelm, say “Howdy” today.

We’ve all used expressions like “under the weather,” “over the hill,” “out of this world” (or on top if it), “up the creek,” “off the wall,” and “swept under the carpet.” We have “beaten around the bush,” been “laid out” by our boss, and become “out of touch.” We’ve had our “nose to the grindstone,” been “shut down,” and tried to “rise and shine.” Most of these sayings have been around for a long time. Think about them; the meanings have little to do with the words used.

“O.K.” may be one of the oldest sayings of all, but it did not come into common use until the 20th century. When Martin Van Buren ran for president in 1836, he was known as “Old Kinderhook,” nicknamed for the Hudson River town where he was born and spent his life. Those who liked him said “O.K.” (or so the story goes). Most of us have “pulled out” to go somewhere. This had to originate with a coach or a wagon being pulled away by horses or oxen and later by a locomotive pulling its train of cars out of a station.

“If I had an old shoe, I’d throw it at you” was a 19th-century saying my grandmother left with me when I last saw her in 1943. Never having heard it, I asked my mother its meaning and was told it meant “Good Luck.” “Darn” was condemned, as it really meant “Damn.” In that family, they didn’t say “Hello” to each other, as it had “Hell” in it, so they used “Hay-O” instead (it’s surprising that my mother’s sister was named Helen).

In the travel agency, we had a secretary with Irish roots who frequently used the expressions “He could talk the leg off a chair” or “He was vaccinated with a phonograph needle,” describing one who talked too much.

Young people are often responsible for new words and meanings creeping into our American language. “Ginger peachy” was superseded by “swell,” which gave way to “neat,” and finally to “cool.” The last was first used in the early 1970s, but it faded for a while before becoming a household word in the past 15 years. Recently, when I returned a book with cemetery records, the recipient said “awesome,” but I told her I didn’t see how records of this kind could be awesome; neither were they “weird,” however. As a general rule, those born before 1955 don’t pronounce the days of the week correctly; we old folks say “Fridy,” instead of “Friday.”

Young executives trying to make an impression have “come up” with “the bottom line is,” “at this point in time,” “grow the company” (in earlier times the only things a person could grow were flowers, vegetables, and crops), and “24-7.” It is even possible to “pull it up” on your

computer, and Susan acquainted me with a new expression “tagged,” which apparently means spraying graffiti. “Good-bye” became “bye-bye” (or “B-by”) that was intended for use by grandmothers waving to their two-year-old grandchildren. “So long” gave way to “Have a good day,” so I bid all of you adieu with the more modern: “Have a good one”!

Work Report: On Tuesday, February 26, the following 13 volunteers were on hand: Steve Bryce (in charge), Jerry Novak, Jeff Pollock, Emil Christofano, Tim Ward, Dennis Dragon, Richard Bernard, Bob Stransky, Anne Cleary, Mac Taylor, Jay Williams, Chuck Erikson, and Jerry Koss (a prospective new volunteer). On the Model 607, the body was moved from the rear of the museum to the front, where it can be more easily worked on (and for other reasons). Leaks on the whistle line and valve were observed and repaired. On the Model 735, the water tank was successfully installed and hooked up. The final 30 tubes were soldered in the condenser, and the shelf under the condenser was sanded and primed. A leak was observed at the elbow on the hot end of the superheater. Work continued on noise insulation for the Lionel layout. The last of the brake lines were removed from the 1937 Packard, and the vacuum tank was removed and a small leak repaired. Steve gave our new volunteer, Jerry Koss, a complete tour, and later he helped with the Packard work and volunteered to refinish the inside of the 607’s body at the dash. He promised to join FAHP and needs a Volunteer Handbook.

On Thursday, February 28, 10 volunteers were on hand as follows: Jerry Novak (in charge), Bob Jordan, Steve Bryce, Paul Kratunis, Robert Hopkins, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Ted Kamen, Ed Paschall, and Kelly Williams. On the 735, the water tank was filled, and no leaks were detected. The flanged surfaces of the condenser were cleaned of excess solder and flux. The bolt holes in the newly fabricated gaskets do not line up, so these will have to be remade. The shelf under the condenser was prepared for final painting. On the Model 607, cotter pins were installed in all the steering linkage, and the bonnet was tried for proper fit. On the Packard brake project, the undercarriage was degreased after 75 years of accumulation, and all the brake lines were prepared for shipping to the shop where they will be replicated.

Bill Schwoebel’s second knee replacement on February 25 was successful, but as of March 2, he was still in the hospital getting his blood count back to normal. We hope you get home soon, Bill.