

AUGUST 18, 2008 F.A.H.P. NEWS

A Trip to Atlantic City, 1921: My parents were married on June 4 that year, and my father was driving a 1921 Third Series Packard Twin Six roadster, with plenty of room in the back for luggage. Some time that summer, he and my mother went to Atlantic City for a weekend. My father had License Tag #8 on his roadster, a number he had had since the first tags were issued in Delaware in 1909. The usual route in those days was to drive to Fourth Street Wharf in Wilmington (at the foot of East Fourth Street), and board the ferry to Pennsgrove, a ride of nearly ½ hour down the Christina and across the Delaware Rivers.

When they got near the ferry slip, traffic was backed up for a block or more, and a number of police officers were in evidence. As they stopped at the rear of the line, to their surprise, they were waved to the front and right onto the ferry while the line remained behind. Soon big cars that appeared to be official filled in behind them, and one of them contained President and Mrs. Harding. They, too, and their entourage were enroute to Atlantic City. In all probability, they had traveled by train from Washington to Wilmington, and it had been arranged with local car dealers who sold big cars to furnish transportation from Wilmington to the famed seashore resort. It's my guess that Frank W. Diver, who, with my father, formed the Packard Motor Company of Wilmington in 1922, may have been involved in furnishing one or more cars for the caravan. The good officers of the law, having seen Delaware #8, figured its occupants were a part of the official party.

Although my father never said he shook hands with the President, my parents' route to Atlantic City paralleled that of the presidential party. When they reached Woodstown, the caravan stopped and Harding dedicated a new high school. My parents stopped and listened but didn't recall anything he said. Very occasionally, I go through Woodstown today on Route 40, and the large brick school building is still there on the east side of town. Harding died somewhat mysteriously in San Francisco two years later, after a trip to Alaska.

Our Volunteers' Picnic yesterday at Auburn Heights on a weather-perfect day was attended by 54 volunteers and family members. About 10 who own antique cars parked them on the front lawn, the cars being welcomed by our 100-year-old Stanley Model H-5. Rose Ann Hoover and Anne Cleary chaired the event, Jerry Novak helped set up, and Brent McDougall grilled the hamburgers and half-smokes (hot dogs). Rose Ann was in complete charge, bringing everything essential to an outstanding picnic. Most attendees brought a covered dish, and the menu was outstanding. Following lunch, those with cars displayed explained them, and a brown bag exchange for those who participated was a lot of fun. Rose Ann served as auctioneer for getting rid of a small amount of Tom and Ruth's surplus junk (and a little good stuff), which, according to cashier Steve Bryce, netted F.A.H.P. \$550. A slapstick video called "The Great New Jersey Steam and Air Race" filmed in 1973 and featuring Weldin Stumpf and our Model H-5, was shown to those who were not picnicked out. Catherine Coin announced that the volunteers of F.A.H.P. had been nominated and SELECTED for the Governor's Outstanding Volunteer Award in the area of Arts and Culture. The Award will be presented at the Dover Downs Hotel at a ceremony on October 23. Tickets for the dinner are \$25 each. Congratulations, each and every one!

At our Board Meeting last Thursday, the Strategic Plan, worked on by an Ad Hoc Committee for over six months, was approved unanimously. The Action Steps to implement this plan will be prioritized very soon, so that important projects can get underway. Both Mike May, our president, and Bob Reilly, our treasurer, spent several days at Auburn Heights preparing reports and successfully accomplishing what had to be done. Thanks go to members of the Ad Hoc sub-committees, the Steering Committee, and to Catherine Coin for getting the Plan readied for approval. On Friday, 5 Stanleys and about 12 people made the round-trip to and from the annual Threshermen's Reunion at Kinzers, PA, and all had a long but enjoyable day. "Students" Mark Russell and Dan Citron solidified their advancement from Beginner to Intermediary in the Driver Qualification Process.

At 10:15 last night (8/17), heavy banging on our front door alerted us to an accident out front where a car with two young male occupants slammed into one of our gateposts, knocking about 1/3 of it over before settling in a position perpendicular to the road with the front half of the car wiped out. Ambulances took the young men to the hospital, but it's possible their worst injury might be one broken arm. The police assured me that if they have insurance, repair to the gatepost should be covered.

Tomorrow, August 19, a few of us meet with State Park officials to get a step closer to the State's settlement on Auburn Heights this fall. Catherine Coin and I meet on Thursday with Peter C. Morrow, director of the Longwood and Welfare Foundations, to acquaint him with F.A.H.P., and hopefully lay the groundwork for future financial support. On Sunday, August 24, several Stanleys and their occupants hope to make the 90-mile round-trip to Worcester, PA, to participate in a "Day on the Farm", a fund raising event sponsored by Ross Myers for the benefit of the Montgomery County Community College.

Tom