

July 24, 2006

Hello, Steam Team:

THE FLAG POLE AT AUBURN HEIGHTS: About 1920, my father decided to erect a flagpole on the east lawn about 100 feet from the circular front porch. It was not to be an ordinary flag pole, but one 108 feet tall with a light on top. The large 48-star flag would be much higher than any of the trees then standing in the lawn, and therefore visible from a great distance, even from the "Gun Club Hill" nearly a mile away.

Heavy iron pipe in many sizes was available in those days, and the bottom length, about 6 feet in the ground surrounded by concrete and 14 feet above the ground was 7-inch (inside diameter). At the first joint, a six-inch pipe was slid inside and the joint "leaded in", providing an early-type weld. 20 feet higher, a 5-inch pipe went inside the 6-inch, and above that, 4-inch inside 5-inch, and so on, with each length being approximately 20 feet long. The top length, perhaps slightly shorter than 20 feet, was either 2-1/2 or 2-inch pipe.

The light on top was encased in a small water-tight dome, with the wire running down through the pole to below ground level, where a small hole in the side allowed it to run underground from there to the house.

A vertical pulley was mounted at the top, large enough for a fairly heavy hemp rope. In those days there were pole painters who would climb the pole like electric linemen and install the rope and paint the pole.

I can't remember that the light ever worked after I came on the scene. We would put up the flag on major holidays, however, and I learned to do this at an early age. Sometimes the rope would break, and that meant the flag could not go up again until a pole painter came around, and he would replace it when he painted the pole. One time the rope got caught with the flag at the top and "Cliffey" (see Weekly News of July 4, 2005) and I couldn't get it down. We were always betting each other we could do something, and I bet him I could get it down. I got my "22" rifle and shot at the rope near the top. I cut the rope, but the flag lodged in a tree high above the ground, and then we did have a time, but somehow we finally got the flag down undamaged. We never had a 50-star flag for this pole.

About 1982 after a lapse of many years, a pole painter surfaced and said he would paint the pole and install a new rope. He told me to go to a boat store and buy the rope and the necessary fixtures, and he would be back the next day to do the job. I got the supplies and he arrived on schedule but I was away for a short time. When I returned, he shook his head and said he was old enough to die but he was not ready. He had gone up to the first joint and thought water had gotten into the pole and rusted it, thereby making it unsafe. I made the decision to take down the pole, and asked Wade Arnold, a local

jack-of-all-trades, to do it for me.

Wade came with his Case 580 tractor and front bucket which he could extend nearly 20 feet, and chained his bucket to the pole as high up as he could reach. Then he wisely cut four holes through the pole near the ground and fastened a chain through the holes above and below where he planned to cut it off. This was to prevent the bottom from "kicking". I told Wade that I had calculated the center of gravity of the pole to be about 38 feet above the ground, and there was no way he could hold it once it started over. Despite this non-professional warning, with his tractor and bucket lashed tight to the pole, he cut it off with his torch. The pole started toward the hedge and Route 82, and no Case tractor with bucket was going to stop it. When the higher portions of the pole hit the tree limbs near the road with some force, the pole bent at a 45-degree angle. The top was suspended above where we enter our present parking lot, with the pole high enough over the road for traffic to pass underneath. Although Wade had no control over the situation as the pole went over, he was not hurt nor was his tractor damaged. Subsequently, he cut up the pole to remove it, and it was as strong as the day it was erected.

Last Tuesday, Bob Wilhelm conducted the second of his training sessions on Stanley operation featuring the fuel systems and burners. Again, attendance was good and enthusiasm high. Tomorrow night, July 25, starting at 6:00, the firing up process and short-distance driving will be demonstrated by Bob, and for some there will be an opportunity to get behind the wheel. Since all cannot be here by 6:00, a second car will be started about 6:30-6:45, and possibly a third shortly thereafter. We'll need to stop by 8:15-8:30 with approaching darkness.

I'm hoping that Butch Cannard or Jerry Lucas can "teach" one of these firing-up sessions tomorrow night, and I plan to fill in. Also, there is an Events Committee meeting Tuesday, 7/25, at 7:30 P.M., probably on the front porch at Auburn Heights. Of special importance is promotion for our August 18-19 event, planning for the October and November weekends, and hopefully setting a schedule for next year.

Ron Turochy and Willard Robinson have volunteered to follow through and get "Little Toot" improved and usable. While it will not be finished, we need to have some of it usable by August 18. Ron has been to Bellevue and will return this week to look at the wooden tender promised us to complete our train. The signal project on the Auburn Valley is moving ahead with Bob Wilhelm, Butch Cannard, Ed Hoffmeister and Bob Reilly in the forefront. Bob has purchased the wire, junction boxes, and certain connector fittings, and Ed has virtually finished the signal construction. Jerry Lucas moved closer to the conclusion of the hydraulic brake project on the Model EX, and Rob Robison, Jim Personti, and the Simpkins' are nearing the same completion on the Model 735. I have purchased the brake line tubing and fittings, and Ed Hoffmeister has lent us the flaring tool and tube-bending equipment. Jim has rebuilt the carburetor on the '32 Packard, using parts from the

original and from the spare to make one whole. I need to use this car for Cam Yorkston's daughter's wedding reception on August 5. A regular work session is scheduled for Thursday evening, July 27, at the regular time.

For those attending work sessions, we have established a new bulletin board on a closet door in the shop, where the latest bulletins and shop memos will be posted. Please get in the habit of checking this frequently. Jerry Novak and Dan Muir have reminded us that the Hagley car show on September 17 is booking up fast, and we should get the cars we hope to take entered as soon as possible. Many thanks to all! Tom