

December 12, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

" S A N D"

"I observed a locomotive in the railroad yards one day;  
It was waiting in the roundhouse where the locomotives stay.  
It was panting for the journey, it was coaled and fully manned  
And it had a little box the fireman was filling full of SAND.

"It appears that locomotives cannot always get a grip  
On their slender iron pavements, 'cause the wheels are apt to slip,  
And when they hit a slippery spot, your tactics they command,  
And to get a grip upon the rail, you sprinkle it with SAND.

"If the track is steep and hilly, and you have a heavy grade,  
And if those who've gone before you have the rails quite slippery  
made,  
If you ever reach the summit of the upper tableland,  
You'll find you have to do it with a liberal use of SAND.

"If you strike quite frigid weather and discover to your cost  
That you're liable to slip on a heavy coat of frost,  
Then some quick decided action will be called into demand,  
And you'll slip clear to the bottom if you haven't any SAND.

"You can get to any station that's on life's schedule seen  
If there's fire beneath the boiler of ambition's strong machine,  
And you'll reach a place called Richtown at a rate of speed that's  
grand  
If for all the slippery places, you've a good supply of SAND."

This anonymous poem was committed to memory by my father some time before 1900. He taught it to me when I was about 8 years old. Always a favorite, I never saw it written until I typed it about 65 years ago. In the final stanza the poet reflected on a philosophy prevalent at the end of the 19th century when Auburn Heights was built: if you had ambition and worked hard there was no limit to how far you could go. The U.S.A. was not yet a super-power, but we didn't know it. Herewith is the railroad story for this week.

Last Saturday night, Chevonne and Rob Robison entertained us royally at their large and very attractive home in Yorklyn. We counted 39 members, spouses, and children who enjoyed the delicious and sumptuous food, the beautiful holiday decorations, and the excellent company. Our thanks go to the Robisons for inviting the FRIENDS to a wonderful holiday party.

Last Tuesday, Anne Cleary called together the Events Committee at her home, which was attended by Jim O'Neill from the State, and Bob

Reilly via conference phone in addition to the regular committee members. It was a very productive meeting with the basic schedule of events at Auburn Heights decided for 2006: June 3 & 4, August 18 & 19 (Friday and Saturday evenings), and October 21 & 22. There will be opportunities for scheduling special groups at other times, in addition to considering a Christmastime operation. Already, the AACA Grand National Meet at Dover, chaired by our own Rose Ann Hoover, has asked for a pre-meet visit to Auburn Heights on Friday, June 16, and we may want to run the train for pre-schoolers on a weekday morning in mid-May. Overall attendance at our public events was about the same in 2004 and 2005. In '04 the schedule resembled our '06 one (3 weekends), while in '05, we had six Sundays. In addition, Rob Robison is heading up a special bus trip to the B & O Museum in Baltimore for the Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve and other interested individuals or groups. The total cost, without lunch, will be \$22.50 for members and \$32.50 for non-members. The date is Saturday, April 1, 2006.

Half the rear axle was removed from the Model 71 last week, and the shaft taken to Herb Kephart for repair. There was definitely a lot of "play" between the shaft and the attached bevel gear. Mike May, our advisor Charlie Johnson, and Herb have all had input on the best way to repair it. We hope to get the rear back together before Christmas, so the car can be aptly tested before going south to the Ormond Beach Centennial event at the end of January. Work continues on the 735, with Rob Robison, and Dale and Ted Simpkins leading the effort. The right-side steam chest cover can be removed from Locomotive #402 to fix the gasket or otherwise repair the leak there. With the holidays approaching and fewer volunteers expected at our work sessions for a few weeks, preparing two cars for Ormond Beach and the 735 and 402 projects mentioned above are probably enough to keep us occupied until after January 1. We will have work sessions on December 13 and 15 this week, but then none until 2006 (two weeks off).

Preliminary to our Annual Meeting on February 16, the nominating committee, chaired by Jerry Novak, will meet on December 15 at Auburn Heights. Also, Rob Robison, planning a quarterly News Letter for FAHP, is setting deadlines for articles to go in the first edition. He needs to settle on a name for the News Letter (suggestions are welcome), and he hopes to get the first one out in January. This is a great effort, and will provide a much-needed addition to our members' benefits. Thank you, Rob. Best wishes to all. Tom