

FAHP News, July 23 2018

The 2018 Return to Auburn Heights Steam Car Tour: After more than nine months of careful planning by Tour Chairman Tom Marshall and the 13-person Tour Committee (Mark Bodenstab, Steve Bryce, John Hopkins, Carla and Jerry Lucas, Jerry Novak, Susan Randolph, Rob Reilly, Bill Rule, Jared Schoenly, Tim Ward, Bob Wilhelm, and Kelly Williams), the 2018 Eastern Steam Car Tour – dubbed the Return to Auburn Heights Tour – kicked off on Sunday, July 8. On Saturday and Sunday, about 36 trailers (including one 48-footer!) descended on Kennett Square and Mendenhall, PA, bringing 38 Stanleys and 1 Grout steamer to the region. John Hopkins, who handled trailer parking for the 2007 Auburn Heights Steam Car Tour, resumed his pivotal role and, with a great team of volunteers, masterfully directed the parking of more than 30 trailers at the Fairfield Inn & Suites (with several more at Mendenhall).

Arriving to beautiful sunshine that remained for the entire week, about a dozen steamers took advantage of Sunday's Warm-Up Tour, a short excursion to West Chester's Antique Ice Tool Museum, where a beautifully restored 1834 barn houses the largest private collection of antique ice tools and memorabilia in the United States. If you have not visited, it is well worth the trip and open Saturdays from 9am to noon through October. Sunday evening, more than 135 gathered at the Red Clay Room in historic Kennett Square for the Firing Up Banquet, which kicked off the busy week with great food and camaraderie.

Touring began in earnest on Monday, with a morning trip to Granogue, the private home of Irénée and Barbara du Pont, where visitors toured the main floor of the grand home and viewed its exquisite Maxfield Parrish mural and Aeolian organ. The steamers then meandered along back roads to Auburn Heights, where they enjoyed their own private Steamin' Day, complete with box lunches from the Country Butcher, steam train rides, mansion tours, fresh steam-popped popcorn and museum displays. Tom Marshall was kept busy all afternoon signing copies of his *Weekly News* book *How It Was* and visiting with tour participants, who represented 24 states (plus Canada, as well as a visiting passenger from Australia, too). Many then capped off the leisurely afternoon with an "ice cream run" to Woodside Farm Creamery to sample the signature Auburn Heights flavor: Motor Oil.

Tuesday brought the first chance for the FAHP steam cars and drivers to tour since the cars remained in the museum for the enjoyment of our guests on Monday. Seven cars, the Stanley models 71, 87, 76, 78, 607, 725 and 735, set out that morning, although the 607 encountered water pump issues that required an early return to Auburn Heights and repair, and the 735 was plagued with burner firing issues that required its return in the trailer later that evening and kept it off the tour until Friday.

The destinations on Tuesday were the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum, St. Peters Village and Jared Schoenly's home, shop and amazing basement full of mechanical collections. That evening, nearly 80 returned to Auburn Heights for the Evening at the Museum program, featuring Terry Amsley and family, who shared stories of Carl Amsley's adventures in the hobby while visitors enjoyed dinner fare from Pizza Capo Food Truck.

On Wednesday, six FAHP cars made the journey with the visiting steamers to Old New Castle, where members of the public gathered to admire the cars as they arrived and circled the cobbled streets to the parking that had been roped off especially for the visit. Treated to coffee, cold water and welcome A/C in the Arsenal, tour participants were free to explore and tour before heading southward to Cheseapeake City, MD, crossing the Reedy Point Bridge. FAHP's Model 87 was towed home with a broken oil pump plunger, and the 740 was towed with an as-yet-undiagnosed valve issue. That evening, the Stanley Museum held its Annual Meeting at Station 52, with approximately 22 attending.

The Thursday itinerary included a scenic drive through Amish country to Lancaster and a stop at the Strasburg Rail Road, where the earliest arrivals were treated to a private shop tour and all were encouraged to explore the many sights and lunch options. That evening, more than 85 tour participants visited Longwood Gardens for the new and spectacular Fountain Show.

The last day, Friday, included a morning drive to Hagley Museum & Library, where visitors were treated to live demonstrations not regularly available to the public before heading to lunch at the complex of restaurants on Route 202 via back roads through the rolling hills along the Brandywine. Many then finished up their touring experience with a private visit to the Mount Cuba Observatory, arranged and coordinated by volunteer Bob Wilhelm. A delicious Blow-Down Dinner (which included complimentary hors d'oeuvres courtesy of Alex Joyce, who could not attend due to a European tour) provided a perfect end to a wonderful week of touring.

We cannot thank enough the many volunteers who made the tour memorable: from those who brought Auburn Heights to life on Monday to those who helped with parking, staffed water & coffee stops, handled supplies, and helped in countless other ways. Rob Reilly, as always, did a magnificent job on the tour book, and the Support Truck (managed expertly by Jerry Novak) provided aid to all who called. Without question, it takes a village – or a Steam Team – to make the magic happen, and we are truly fortunate to have an amazing corps of volunteers working so tirelessly as we steam forward in all endeavors.

We thank, too, everyone who signed up for the tour -- from first-timers to seasoned tourers! I hope you enjoyed it as much as we did – and we look forward to seeing you down the road!

Work Report: On Tuesday, July 17, volunteers attending were Richard Bernard, Mike Ciosek, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Brent Mc Dougall, Bill Schepper, Neal Sobocinski, Mac Taylor, Jay Williams and Steve Bryce, Supervisor. On the 740, we removed the engine case to see what had caused the car to refuse to move during the tour. The original symptom was steam blowing through the engine, which did not stop when the car was pushed to move the valves. Tonight we saw odd behavior of the valve gear. When the rear wheel was turned by hand in reverse, at the same point in the rotation the Stephenson link would drop pulling the hook up arm more than halfway to the hooked up position. We could see no bent parts or missing pins observing the engine from the top. Slightly later in the stroke, the hook-up linkage would suddenly pop back into the original position (not hooked up). This should be observed again from the bottom with the case removed. I wonder if this is normal behavior as I have felt the valve linkage pedal shudder on some cars when hooking up.

On the 37 Packard caked on dirt and grease was removed from the rear axle in preparation for dropping the gas tank to clean it. I question if this should be done during the summer months. The electric train group worked to improve the reliability of the engines to be used at the next Steam'n' Day.

The smoke bonnet wires attaching it to the top of the boiler on the 76 were replaced. Two out of three of them broke during the tour. Insulation and dip lag still need to be replaced.

On Thursday, July 19, the following attended: Richard Bernard, Mike Ciosek, Devon Hall, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, and Stan Lakey supervising. The garage electrical closet was cleaned out for the upcoming electrical work. The gas pump glass tube is stored, wrapped in a quilt, in the bottom of the wooden closet to the right of the office door, behind the door with the pencil sharpener.

The Model 740 was moved and the case oil residue and absorbent material was cleaned up, removed, and the floor was cleaned. The car was replaced. An attempt was made to remove the steam case drip cap with various wrenches, but failed.

AVRR Report: Volunteers: Mike Ciosek, Brent McDougall. Accomplishments: Cleaned the 402 locomotive, ordered parts for the diesel horn, sifted gravel and put it in the ballast box.