

April 18, 2005

Hello, Steam Team:

Tomorrow night, April 19, Ed Hoffmeister is going to run a "popcorn" course, demonstrating the operation of our antique Cretors popper, with the hope of getting several S.T. members who can operate it on our special occasions. I hope all interested can attend. Although many of you have heard this story, Ed wanted me to relate it again:

In the mid-1950's the duPont Company maintained a large room on the corridor going to the Playhouse Theatre (now the duPont Theatre) in which they featured changing displays relating to duPont products. Each display would last about 3 weeks. My father was asked to lend his 1901 Toledo steamer and the Cretors popcorn machine for such an exhibit, as it featured duPont's automotive products (polishes, anti-freeze, paint, etc.). The Toledo was pushed through the lobby of the Hotel duPont to get there, as was the popcorn machine. I was supposed to show some nicely-dressed young women how to make popcorn, as an added enticement for visitors to come in. I was well along in firing up the machine, when I realized I had forgotten the popcorn oil and flavoring (we bought a product called "Popsit Plus" which had everything mixed together). In order to continue the lesson, I asked them to see if they could get some olive oil from the duPont Cafeteria in the basement. When they didn't return in a reasonable time, I decided not to wait, and squirted a liberal coating of steam cylinder oil (which I had for the engine) in the bottom of the pan to keep the corn from sticking. By the time the girls returned, I had some popcorn ready to be sampled. They tasted it and remarked that it was the most delicious popcorn they had ever experienced! I admit, it tasted quite good.

Last Saturday, April 16, several FAHP members, instructors and students, enjoyed a beautiful day and tested out the Auburn Valley R.R. The hard work on the locomotive, mechanical by Jim Personti and cosmetic by Jerry Novak and Anne Cleary, paid off, and the #402 did very well. Steve Jensen had spent a lot of time and effort on rebuilding the trucks on four of our passenger cars, and with adjustments, these seem fine as well. The track work of many volunteers, completed mostly on the previous two weekends, must have been done very well, and we believe we are ready for our first charter group, the Wilmington Friends School Alumni, on Sunday, May 1. A few got to run the locomotive for the first time, and several others refined their skills. We also had driving lessons in two of the Stanleys, with Jerry Lucas, Butch Cannard, and myself as instructors. Jerry Novak continued to detail Locomotive 401, and Dave Sedar painted the sprinkler valve, itself an antique of about 1950, in the Museum. Butch printed some more flyers for our

"Steamin' Sundays". It was good to have Anthony Zych back with us.

Our Management Group and Board Committee meetings continue. On Tuesday night, April 12, Bill Schwoebel had a meeting in the Museum of all his committee chairpeople, Wednesday afternoon Joe Mosteller called a meeting of the Finance Committee at Arby's (Painters Cross Roads), and Thursday evening Anne Cleary assembled her Special Events Committee at her home. Rose Ann bought 4 mannequins at bargain price for special museum exhibits (she and Jerry Novak went to Rehoboth to fetch them), and several members are making progress toward developing a small gift shop for FAHP.

The rear of the Model 76 is completely re-assembled and the car has been driven around the driveway with good results. Jim Personti did a beautiful job of fabricating the broken activator arm and housing for the hand brake, and Rob Robison bled the hydraulic brakes. Unfortunately, Jerry Lucas and I discovered an off-center situation for the new differential, that Butch said was also there with the previous installation that failed in Colorado last September. This problem may require disassembling the axle again.

A short flue extension is planned for the CX, and then some "wallpapering" should finish the small jobs on this car so the rear deck cover and the seat can be put back on and the "birthday car" can be considered finished and ready for the season. The Model 735 went to Byrd's Paint Shop today for a face lift. Unfortunately, I see signs that this may be a two-month project, with the other work the shop has taken in. What else is new? Our Steam Team can refinish small parts for this car that have been removed. The contract for the DVD, produced by Alan Berry and NFL Films, has been signed and we are sending our check for \$2,000 for the music rights, to be reimbursed by the State Parks Division. When completed, this will give us the right to reproduce this DVD and use it or sell copies as we choose.

Herman Feissner has had two rough months, but is hoping to be back with us on Thursday. Most of his problem stemmed from a reaction to drugs and radiation. Mark Hopkins reports that his father is still in the Medical Center at Hershey, and a speedy recovery is not expected. We wish both our members the very best. What wonderful spring weather we are having- it's no time to be "under the weather". Tom